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The Beaver

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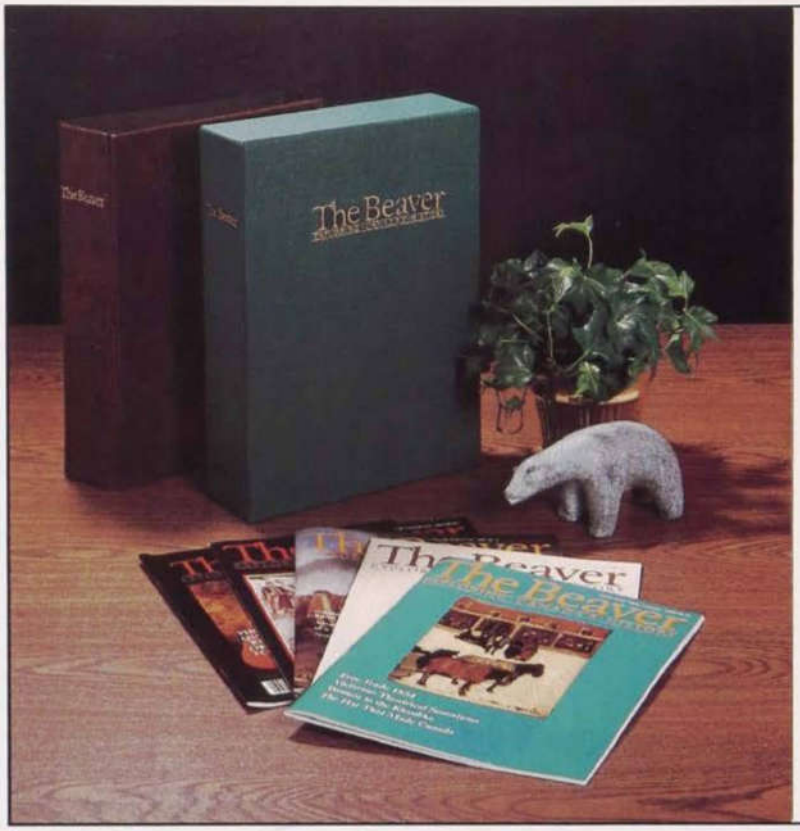
CANADA'S BAPTISM OF FIRE

The Great War 1914-1918

75th Anniversary Special Issue



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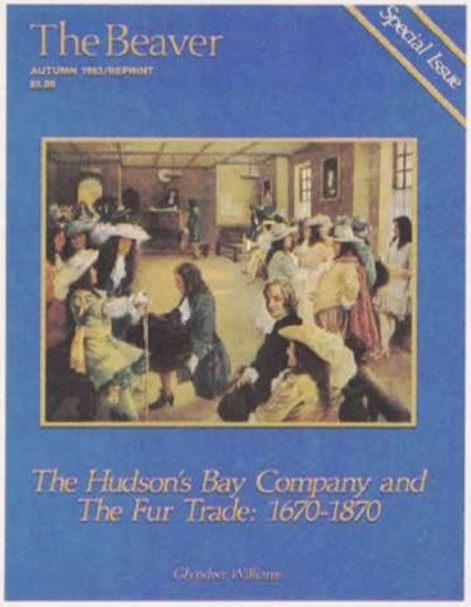

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The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY

1914-1918

CANADA'S BAPTISM OF FIRE

A 75th Anniversary Special Issue

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A Baptism of Fire

"I look upon the People and the nation handed on to me as a responsibility conferred upon me by God, and I believe, as it is written in the Bible, that it is my duty to increase this heritage for which one day I shall be called upon to give an account. Whoever tries to interfere with my task I shall crush."

That "frantic boast and foolish word" was uttered by Kaiser Wilhelm II shortly before the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. In the process of what followed, several thrones, including the Kaiser's, were lost, 10 million people were killed and 30 million went missing or were wounded. In the epidemic of Spanish influenza that followed the war a further 10 million perished.

What was it all about? Many of those who died had no clear idea. Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, a Polish artist who fought on the British side, thought he knew in 1915. In a letter to Wyndham Lewis he wrote: "I have been fighting for two months and I can now gauge the intensity of life . . . this war is a great remedy. In the individual it kills arrogance, self-esteem, pride. It takes away from the masses numbers upon numbers of unimportant units, whose economic activities become noxious as the recent trade crises have shown us." The letter was written in April. By the end of June Gaudier-Brzeska had joined the unimportant economic units in oblivion.

The great conflict, described by H.G. Wells in a moment of optimism as "the War that will end War", began 75 years ago and most of the Canadians who survived Vimy, Hill 70 and Passchendaele are now dead, but the monumental horror of that terrible ordeal continues to haunt us. For Canada it was a baptism of fire and when peace came in 1918 it was clear to many that the final struggle had only been postponed. "This is not peace," said Foch in a dreadful and tragically perceptive prophecy in 1919, "it is an armistice for 20 years".

Canadians of today, with a much different set of loyalties and a far different world-view to the Canadians of 1914, may wonder why Canada felt obliged to participate in what was ostensibly a European struggle. It all looked much different in 1914. Ties to the "Motherland" were close and intense and the threat to British interests was seen as a threat to the British Empire, of which Canada considered itself an important part. Even so, inflated reports of German "atrocities" in "gallant little Belgium" were required to bring the youth of Canada to full fever pitch.

"Canada entered the war a colony," wrote A.R.M. Lower in *Colony to Nation,* "she emerged from it close to an independent state." This new respect and status was bought dearly on the battlefields of France and Flanders, but it was also fought for in the councils of the Allies as Canada sought full status as a participant in the war and a place at the peace table at Versailles. In 1916 Sir Robert Borden complained in a letter: "It can hardly be expected that we shall put 400,000 or 500,000 men in the field and willingly accept the position of having no more voice and receiving no more consideration than if we were toy automata." A year earlier, R.B. Bennett had written to Borden, "Are we fighting the English or the Germans?"

The historian looking back to World War I sees it as a completed event with meaning and form. Those who were living through it saw it at close range, a day at a time. The meaning of what they were enduring often eluded them. To them, the war was what was happening to them at a given moment.

Even the British Prime Minister, H.H. Asquith, was unable to see the full extent of the storm clouds that began to move into the European sky in that golden summer of 1914. In a letter to Lady Ottoline Morrell he wrote: "This will take the attention away from Ulster, which is a good thing."

On the German side, there was a clearer idea of what the war meant: "Germany," wrote Colonel-General Helmuth von Moltke, "is the only possibility for the further spiritual development of man."

Lieutenant Bernard Montgomery — "Monty" — expected a short war: "At least the thing will be over in three weeks", he wrote home. Others expected to be home by Christmas.

Some were astute early on. On 6 September 1914, after the German General Staff's "Schlieffen Plan" had failed and the first German thrust had been halted short of Paris, Crown Prince Wilhelm wrote: "We have lost the war. It will go on for a long time, but it is already lost."

It could be argued that *everybody* lost World War I. On the Somme in 1916 the British lost 57,470 men in a single day. France was bled white at Verdun. German and Austrian losses were staggering. Canada's dead numbered 59,544 and there were 172,950 non-fatal Canadian casualties.

THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918

The first great war involving large numbers of "civilians" as combatants left terrible stories of loss and mindless destruction that haunt us still. The poet and painter Isaac Rosenberg wrote to a friend on 8 June 1915: "I am thinking of enlisting if they will have me, though it is against all my principles of justice . . .".

In March 1918 Rosenberg went out on patrol and never came back. His body was never found. He left only his poems.

In 1917 there was a mutiny in the German fleet. One of the mutineers, Albin Kobes, wrote to his parents: "I have been sentenced to death today, Sept. 11 1917. Only myself and another comrade; the others have been let off with 15 years imprisonment. You will have heard why this has happened to me. I am a sacrifice of the longing for peace, others are going to follow. On Wednesday Sept. 12 at 9 o'clock I am going to be sacrificed to military justice. I would have liked to press your hands once more to say goodbye, but I will do it silently. Console Paula and my little Fritz. I don't like dying so young, but I die with a curse on the German militarist state. These are my last words. I hope that some day you and mother will be able to read them." And there were others, on both sides, who died without saying goodbye and who died, moreover, without knowing what they were really fighting for.

Much has been written about the war to end war. Almost everyone, from Rudyard Kipling to Adolf Hitler, had his say, but in the end it is a woman, the British socialist Vera Brittain, who speaks most powerfully for the victims of the war: "I was beginning already to suspect that my generation had been deceived, its young courage cynically exploited, its idealism betrayed, and I did not want to know the details of that betrayal. At an inter-collegiate debate a Hindu student remarked that here at any rate was 'the Peace that passeth all understanding' — and I left it at that".

The Kaiser survived the war and lived to see the start of the next one. As he arrived in Holland to begin his years of exile he said: "If it is possible I should like above all a cup of hot English tea".

In the pages that follow, *The Beaver* looks back at Canada's baptism of fire.

MARY RITER HAMILTON

An Artist In No-Man's-Land

By Angela Davis

Canadian participation in World War I was total. On the "home front" Canadians were committed to the production of war materials, to increasing the food supply from the farms of the Western provinces, and to the development of organizations devoted to assisting the dependants of the overseas force. At another level, certain Canadians provided a lasting memorial of their country's involvement in the war.

In 1916, with the establishment of the Canadian War Records Office and the Canadian War Memorials Fund, Canadian artists became part of a unique undertaking. Paid by the Fund and publicized by the London-based Records Office of Sir Max Aitken (Lord Beaverbrook), artists were commissioned to provide a visual accounting of the Canadian contribution. The work produced was of high quality artistically and has proved to be historically valuable in terms of understanding the conditions faced by the fighting men. Some of the most evocative and powerful works were, however, produced in the years immediately following the war by the Canadian artist, Mary Riter Hamilton. A selection of her battlefield paintings are currently the focus of an exhibition being held in Winnipeg under the joint auspices of the War Amputations of Canada, the National Archives of Canada and the University of Winnipeg. Why Mary Hamilton was not included among the "official" war artists is, so far, not known.

The majority of artists employed by the Records Office were British, but a number of eminent Canadians, including Maurice Cullen, A.Y. Jackson, F.H. Varley and J.W. Beatty were included. Some worked on or near the front line, producing pictures of the battlefields which emphasized both the human and environmental destruction of war, while others recorded war activity at home. Portraits of military and political figures and paintings of military camps, war factories and shipyards were the major output of many of these "official" artists. A number of women artists were involved in recording the "home front", including the Canadians Mabel May, Florence Wyle, Frances Loring and Florence Carlyle. But the Canadians employed, men and women, were almost all from Toronto and Montreal. There were no Maritimers and, with the exception of Cyril Barraud from Winnipeg, no Westerners. As Maria Tippett has noted in her valuable study, *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art, and the Great War,* when records of war work or portraits of war heroes were required from "outside the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal triangle", the work was not given to a local artist but to a member of the Eastern-based group.

It was probably this "central Canadian exclusiveness" which excluded the Western artist Mary Riter Hamilton from participation in the war records scheme.

Although a European-trained artist, who had travelled widely throughout France before the war, Hamilton was not, at any time, contacted by either the Memorials Fund or the War Records Office. When, for example, a portrait was required of a war hero living in Vancouver, no one seemed aware that in Victoria, Hamilton was occupied in painting portraits of the British Columbia lieutenants-governor and had, indeed, produced numerous portraits in France before the war. Instead, the portrait was painted by the Eastern-based Ernest Fosbery.

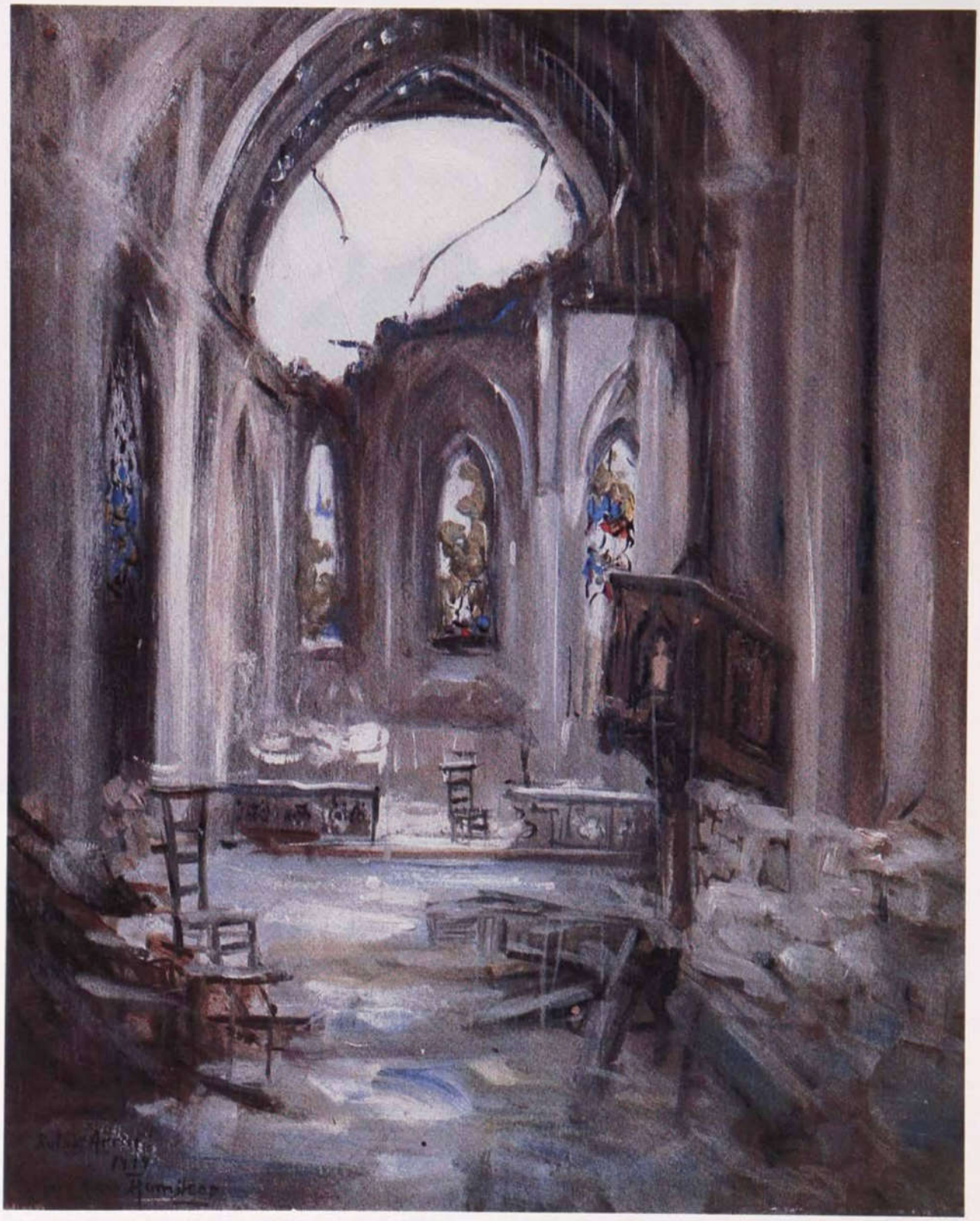
Fortunately for posterity, however, Mary Hamilton was not unknown to a wounded veterans' group in Vancouver. In 1919, six months after the end of the war, she went to France and Belgium under the auspices of the Amputations Club of British Columbia and proceeded to create a unique record of the European battlefields before reconstruction was completed. Her work was concentrated on the places where Canadians had fought and died. Her depictions of Ypres,

Sanctuary Wood, Flanders. Oil on plywood, 1919. The Mary Riter Hamilton paintings that appear with this article are reproduced with the permission of the National Archives, Ottawa. The illustration on page 5 is a lunette mural by British artist Frank Brangwyn in the Manitoba Legislative Building, Winnipeg.

St. Eloi, Courcelette on the Somme and Vimy Ridge all show the desolation of the land and symbolize the accompanying loss of life. But she also offered glimpses into the resurgence of new life and normality with paintings of markets and new homes.

Records of Mary Hamilton's early life are still incomplete. It seems fairly certain that she was born in Teeswater, Ontario, in 1873 and when quite a small child moved with her family to Clearwater, Manitoba. Here she lived until her marriage in 1889 when she moved to Port Arthur (Thunder Bay, Ontario). Her husband, Charles W. Hamilton, ran a general store and was, according to newspaper accounts of the time, a "leading merchant" of the town. Following his death in 1893, Hamilton was left, according to one account, with "ample means". She subsequently returned to Manitoba and began her career as an artist.

Hamilton had apparently "always loved to paint and draw", but had had no opportunity of acquiring professional training or of putting her skills to practical use. In September of 1894, however, she opened a china painting studio in Winnipeg. China painting was a popular art-form during the late nineteenth century so Hamilton had no difficulty in attracting students to her classes. She and her students became extremely successful, winning prizes at local exhibitions and selling their work. But by 1898, she was advertising herself as a "Teacher of China Painting and Water Colours", and was obviously ready to extend her own artistic talents. At some time during the next two years she studied briefly in Toronto with George Reid and Mary Hiester Reid, and met Wyly Grier. These teachers, highly respected artists in Eastern Canada, were all members of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts who



Interior of a destroyed church, Arras, 1919.

Cloth Hall, Ypres, 1920.

had received their own training in Europe. They recognized Hamilton's capabilities and suggested that she go to Paris to study. Training in Europe was the recognized course for any serious art student of the time. The training schools of South Kensington in London and the private academies of Julian, Calarossi and Vitti in Paris were full of aspiring artists from all over the world. All the major Canadian artists and teachers had trained there. Consequently, when Mary Hamilton decided to further her art education, she closed her china painting studio in Winnipeg and departed for Europe in the summer of 1901.

She did not go immediatley to Paris. Instead, she went to Berlin to be near a family friend. She started her art studies with Franz Skarbina, an Italian landscape artist with a studio in Berlin.

The following year she moved to Paris. With the exception of a period in 1906 and 1907, she remained in Paris for the next nine years. She studied under a number of well-known teachers of the time and increased her skills with sketching holidays in Holland, Italy and Spain. In 1905, her dedication was rewarded with acceptance of three of her pictures for exhibition in the Paris Salon.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Academies of France and England exercised considerable influence over an artist's future. Unless in open revolt against the strictures of academic rules and regulations, artists who wished to have their work recognized and seen by the general public needed the approval of "official" academic juries. Acceptance of paintings for exhibition in the annual Salon of the Academy gave one the status of a professional, bona fide artist. To have work accepted by the Academy was, therefore, proof to Mary Hamilton of her standing as a legitimate artist. This was further demonstrated by reproduction of her painting *Les Sacrifices* on the front cover of the popular French art magazine *Lectures Pour Tous*. From 1905 on, her work was exhibited regularly at the Salon and by European standards she was part of the accepted art world.

In June of 1906, Hamilton returned to Winnipeg

Mary Riter Hamilton before World War I.

and stayed until the following spring. It is not clear if she hoped to remain permanently in Canada or if she had returned primarily to visit her mother. Nevertheless, exhibitions of her work were held in Winnipeg and Toronto and were enthusiastically received. She sold a considerable number of works from this collection and opened a studio in Winnipeg where she had, according to one source, "a large class of pupils". Yet, by 1907 she was back in Paris.

Mary Hamilton continued her studies and travels and in 1909 her painting, *Les Pauvres,* was accepted for exhibition in the New Salon. This was of particular significance because very few non-Academy members had their work included in the year. *Les Pauvres* was also included in the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 held at San Francisco. In 1911, besides exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendents and with the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Hamilton was one of a number of artists chosen for special mention in the international art journal *The Studio.*

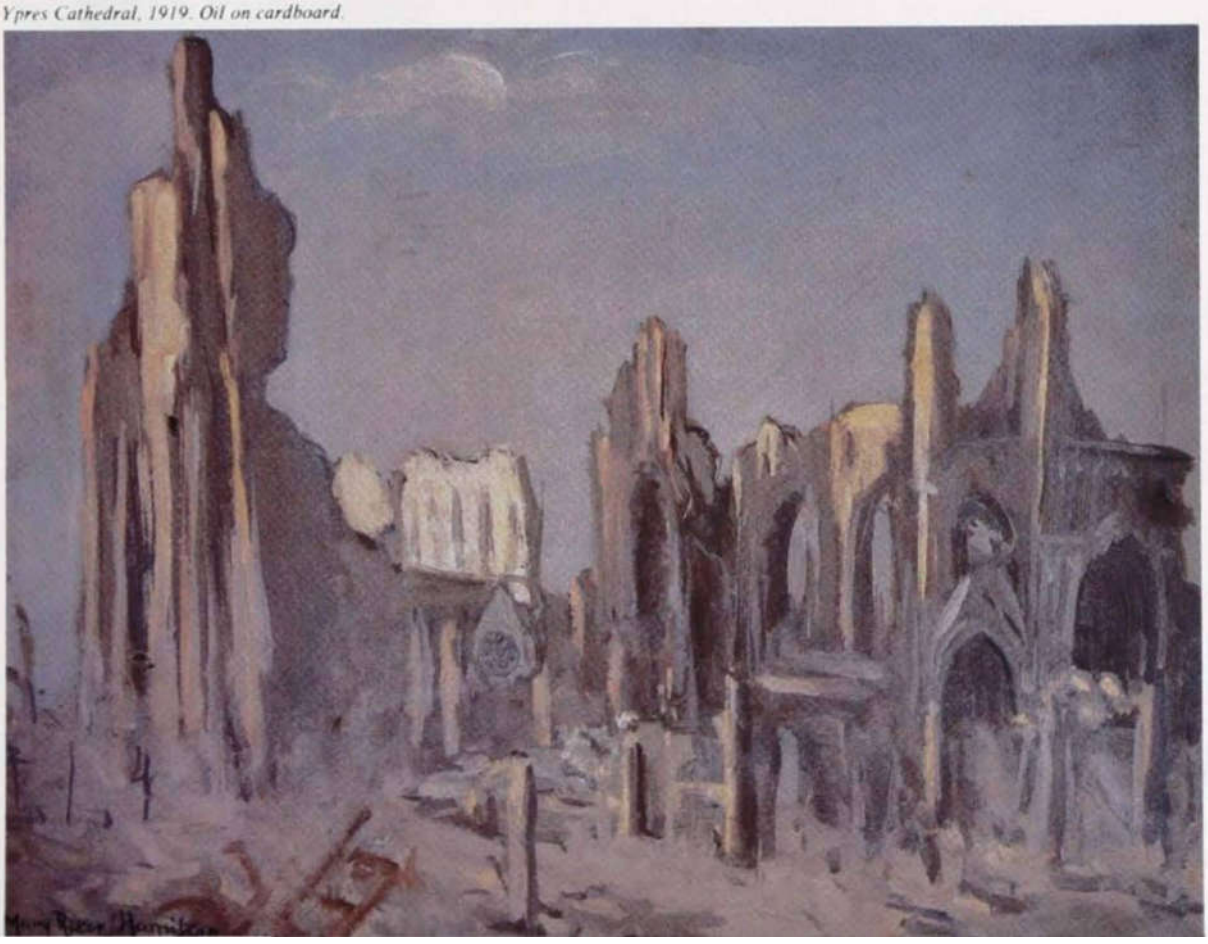
Owing to the illness of her mother, Mary Hamilton returned again to Winnipeg in 1911. Following her mother's death, she put together a collection of nearly 150 oils and water-colours, including some of her Salon pictures. They were seen in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. The exhibitions were highly successful. The Ottawa exhibition received the patronage of the Governor-General and his wife, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught; the Montreal exhibition was under the patronage of the Prime Minister and his wife, Sir Robert and Lady Borden; and a number of artists and art critics attended the galleries. Sir Edmund Walker, art connoisseur and Chairman of the Advisory Council of the National Gallery, said that Hamilton's work was "masterful in colouring, adroit in draughtsmanship, deft in handling of tones and values, and poetic in treatment of atmosphere and sentiment." The American artist, Charles Dana Gibson, said "She has the power: she is an artist; she has made good and does good work." Not all the reviews were as effusive, however. The art critic of the *Montreal Star* said that her work was "just a little in advance of the time", but added that this criticism should not necessarily be construed as "a blame". Rather, it could be "almost called encouragement". In Winnipeg her work was criticized for its inconsistency.

While in Winnipeg Mary Hamilton stated her intention of producing a Canadian landscape series to exhibit in Paris: "Everyone . . . is so interested in this country," she said. She went to Alberta where she painted scenes of mountains and lakes, and portraits of local Indians. These were exhibited in Calgary and Winnipeg and were duly sent to France. Following this bout of work she went to Victoria where she unexpectedly found herself remaining for the next five years: the war in Europe prevented her return to Paris. She opened a studio, accepted pupils and undertook a number of portrait assignments. But the sales of her private works were never enough to allow her financial security and, as she said following an exhibition in Vancouver, "artists, like other people, must live and yet it is almost impossible to live in Canada by art alone. Not only is it a matter of money, but of appreciation." At the end of the war, however, she obtained the commission which enabled her to return to Europe and produce the works for which she subsequently received the most attention.

In 1919, a Vancouver publisher, H.F. Paton, began publication of a magazine, *The Gold Stripe.* With proceeds going to the Amputation Club of British Columbia, the magazine consisted of articles from veterans, stories of deeds of valour, photographs and other memorabilia related to the war. After three issues Paton incorporated them into a book, also titled *The Gold Stripe.* This had a number of sub-titles: "A Tribute to those who were killed, maimed and wounded in the Great War", "A Book, one of the many efforts to Re-establish some back in civil life" and "A Book of War, Peace and Reconstruction for Prosperity". The year of publication, 1919, was described as "the year of Peace, of the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales and for the centenary of Florence Nightingale". In the May issue of the magazine, there was an article on Mary Riter Hamilton by J.E.M. Bruce. Bruce gave a bio-

Dug-out on the Somme. Oil on cardboard.

Ypres Cathedral, 1919. Oil on cardboard.

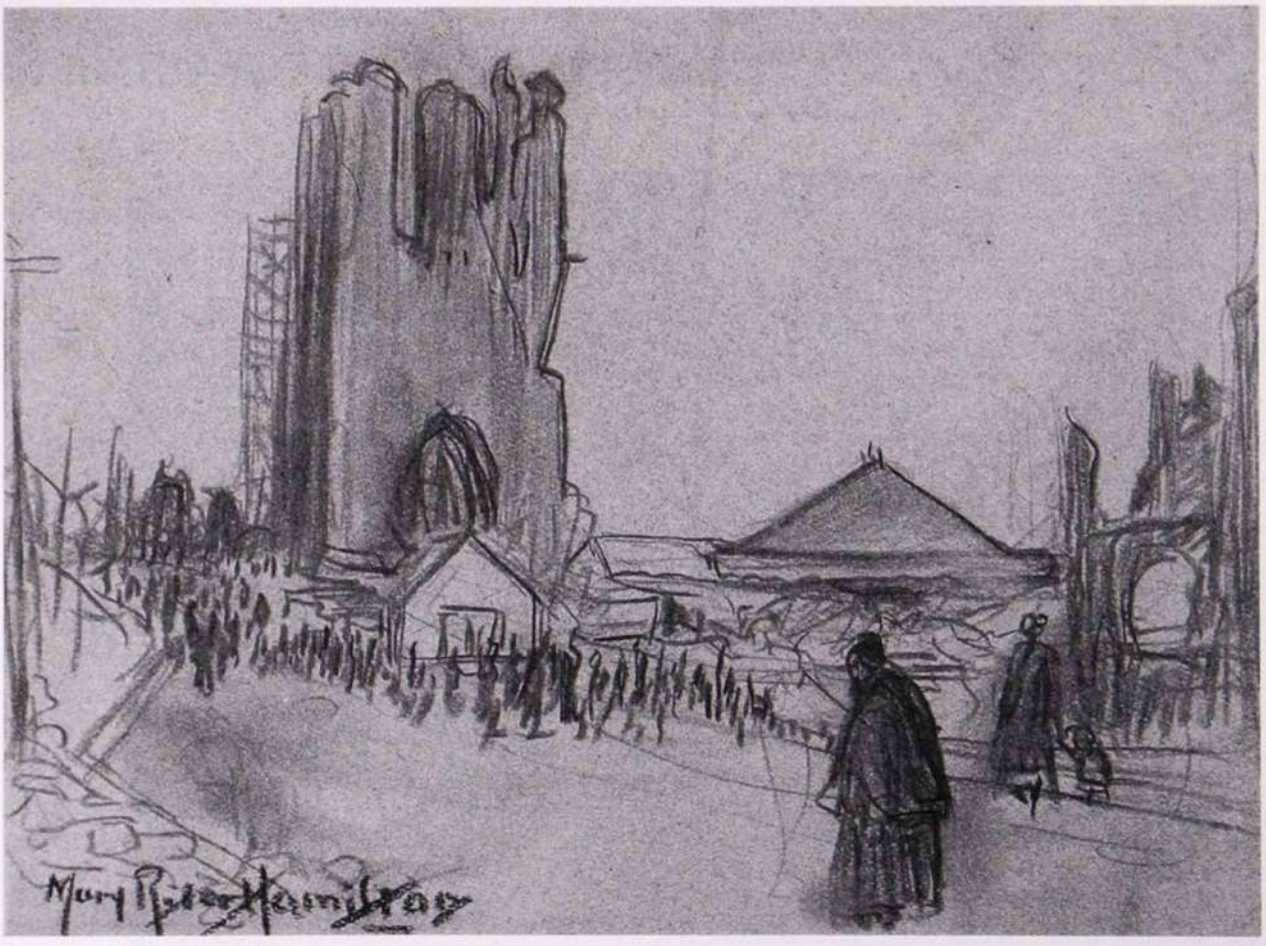


graphical account of Hamilton's art education, mentioned that she had been in Vancouver for eighteen months waiting "the opportunity that the end of the fighting in Europe would make for her return to Paris" and then described the commission she had undertaken for *The Gold Stripe*. She was in Europe to produce paintings for reproduction in the magazine. With the knowledge, Bruce said, of "her abiding love of her native land, of her admiration for the splendid men who went under arms across the sea to preserve the ideals of the Empire," Canadians could expect her to return "with records which will be fitting additions to the archives founded to preserve the history of the Dominion's part in the Great War." She left for Europe in March 1919, was in Arras, France, by June, and in the third publication of *The Gold Stripe* (the book), a number of her paintings were reproduced. Her work, it was said, "had progressed far enough to show that it will be, when complete, an achievement of the greatest historical, as well as pictorial, importance."

Mary Hamilton's commission from *The Gold Stripe* was "to reproduce the battlefields in paint". It is not clear if she knew what to expect when she arrived in France or if she was aware of the difficulties under which she would have to work. But the letters received from her by the magazine's editors demonstrate her concern to record the landscape before the process of reconstruction removed all "traces of war". In spite of snow and extreme cold when she arrived at Vimy, for instance, she said that she was glad to have seen it "under hard conditions, for I want to get the spirit of it . . . I feel that it is fortunate that I arrived before it is too late to get a real impression." She lived at first with the remaining Canadian army contingent at Arras, but on its departure, she lived alone in a military hut with the Chinese labourers hired to clear the battlefields as her only neighbours. It was "mighty cold and uncomfortable," the food was often inedible and she ran considerable risks from gangs of deserters and "criminals". But her intention, as she said in one of her letters, was to remain in the battlefield zone until "I finish the work I came here to do".

She worked there until 1922, producing in the process over three hundred pictures. She worked mostly

Ypres, 1921.



in oils, but also used charcoal, chalk, pastel and pencil. Her surfaces were of plywood, paper, canvas and cardboard. Her media had, of necessity, to be light and portable. At times she left the battlefields to work at a studio in Paris. There she was able to turn a few drawings into etchings and "work up" some sketches into more formal paintings. For the most part, however, her battlefield paintings were completed where they were. The subject-matter of her paintings was, no doubt understandably, the same as for the artists who worked at the front during the last years of the war: landscapes portrayed mine-craters, cemeteries, shell-blasted trees, desolate roads going off into a distance of smoke and emptiness, destroyed tanks and ruined buildings. But where the war artists depicted the war in action, with images of battle and the dead and wounded, Mary Hamilton, working during the period of reconstruction, was able to introduce a second and more positive theme. Contrasting with the paintings *Dug-out on the Somme* and *Sanctuary Wood*, were *Cloth Hall, Ypres, 1920;* and other paintings depicting a return to normal life.

The pictures made during the first year were, as well as being reproduced in *The Gold Stripe*, exhibited in Vancouver and Victoria in 1920, under the auspices of the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire and the Amputation Club. They were well received, even if the newspaper critiques were at pains to explain that war artists no longer aimed at photographic accuracy but "rather have endeavoured to convey to us the impressions that those scenes made upon them". Hamilton's major successes, however, were in France and England. In April of 1922 a number of the battlefield paintings were exhibited in the foyer of the Paris Opéra. This was a considerable honour as the exhibition was held to display the model of a proposed inter-allied monument, the Pantheon of the Somme. In the same year her work was exhibited with the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts and the Société des Artistes. It was also part of a Somme Memorial Exhibition held in Amiens in June. At the opening ceremony for this, she was awarded the purple ribbon of Les Palmes Academiques, the Order of Public Instruction, by the Minister of Beaux-Arts and commended for her work by the President of the General Council of the Somme district. According to one source, this award was, at the time, "as high a distinction as a woman can receive in France, short of the rarely-granted Legion of Honour". Furthermore, Mary Hamilton was the only Canadian artist to have had her art recognized in such a manner.

Abandoned tanks at the Front.

Hell-fire Corner, 1919.

In 1923, over a hundred of the battlefield paintings were exhibited in the Simonson Galleries at Surrey House, London, again in aid of the planned Somme battlefield memorial. But following this exhibition Mary Hamilton stored the works in London and returned to Paris. Although offers to purchase the pictures were made in Europe, she did not sell them. She became ill and lost the sight of one eye. According to a number of sources she had by now lost the desire to paint in her earlier style. She began, instead, to design and produce hand-painted "dress accessories". These were extremely popular at the time. She was awarded a gold medal for them in 1925 at the International Decorative Arts Exhibition and made enough money, as she said, to "bring myself and my pictures home". She returned to Canada in December 1925, but to a different Canada from the one she had left behind.

Mary Hamilton went first to Winnipeg. She once again opened a teaching studio and in May an exhi-

Canal, Cambrai. Oil on commercial canvas board.

Canadian Monument, Passchendaele Ridge. Oil on cardboard.

Chateau grounds near Ypres. Oil on cardboard.

bition of the battlefield paintings was held under the auspices of the University Women's Club at the Fort Garry Hotel. She also began corresponding with Dr. A.G. Doughty, the Dominion Archivist, concerning the placement of her collection in the Public (now National) Archives. She had initially approached the wife of Robert Rogers, at that time the Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South. In a letter written to Mrs. Rogers in March, she said, "It is my great wish to give this collection of pictures to the Canadian Government, if it be deemed worthy of acceptance." Mrs. Rogers visited Dr. Doughty in Ottawa who then wrote to Mary Hamilton expressing his interest in giving the paintings "a prominent place amongst the things relating to the late war". In June, eight of the paintings were exhibited in the archives where they "attracted a great deal of attention", in July, Hamilton formally donated 227 paintings to the Public Archives and in August, Dr. Doughty wrote thanking her for her "generous gift". In view of the number of pictures and their European reputation, Dr. Doughty's letter was brief and almost perfunctory. He noted that there was no minister to thank her formally on behalf of the government and described how the pictures were being displayed "in a temporary fashion with the posters and war souvenirs", but in such a location that they could be "seen daily by visitors to the Archives". He planned, he said, to have them framed differently, but would not do anything until he knew "what is best to be done about the war collection". Dr. Doughty also said that he felt "future generations will value [the paintings] even more than the present".

How Mary Hamilton interpreted this response is difficult to tell. Certainly, she must have been aware of a growing opposition to art related to the war. The earlier enthusiasm for recording and exhibiting images of the places where Canadians had fought and died had dissipated. In the mid-1920s, for instance, the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire had arranged to circulate reproductions of the work of the official Canadian war artists to schools across Canada. The aim was to remind children of the sacrifices made and the "terrible wastage of war". But by 1926 many school teachers felt that such art glorified war instead of serving to "propagate peace" and in some instances refused to exhibit the reproductions. On 11 November 1927, Armistice Day, an exhibition consisting of Hamilton's remaining battlefield paintings, some earlier landscapes and pastel portraits, was held at the home of the Hon. and Mrs. Robert Rogers on Roslyn Road (in Winnipeg). Although forty-two out of fifty-one pictures were of the battlefields, the effect was muted by the fact that forty-eight works by Hamilton's students were also included in the exhibition. If Mary Hamilton needed any further proof that times had changed, she only had to read the review of the exhibition in the *Manitoba Free Press*. There was no mention of war or battlefields. The writer of the column was more concerned with the venue of the exhibition:

> One cannot help but feel how nice it is to view a picture in the environment of the home . . . it was a real pleasure. One can only guess at the amount of trouble, both to the artist and to the hostess, the arranging of the pictures must have been. On the other side of the scale and more than counter-balancing is the satisfaction of the artist of showing her or her pictures in congenial surroundings and to the hostess the greater satisfaction, perhaps, of doing a gracious act and helping art in a truly practical manner.

It is not surprising, therefore, considering the changing circumstances, that Hamilton had decided to donate the major part of her collection to the Archives.

Mary Hamilton stayed in Winnipeg for two more years, teaching and working in her studio. In 1929, "in search of health" she moved to Vancouver, and once again established a teaching studio. There she held exhibitions of her own and her students' work in 1933 and 1935. A review of the latter was as confusing in its reaction to her work as the earlier Canadian critiques: the *Vancouver Province* reviewer said that "the show is interesting for the reason that it is frankly old-fashioned. The styles of painting, pencilling and crayoning are mid-Victorian in essence and form a contrast (by no means unfavourable) with modern artistic work which has been shown in the city. " In 1939, the Vancouver Art Gallery held an exhibition of thirty of her works, but in 1944 her paintings were put into storage and were not seen again until after the end of World War II. She also gave up her studio and her teaching during this period. By 1948, aged 75, she was tired and in financial difficulties. Douglas Telfer, the minister of her local church, recognizing that "her pride denied the ministry of charity," organized a showing of her paintings in his home. The pictures were cleaned and hung by members of the church, publicity was supplied by the I.O.D.E. and a silver collection took the place of an entrance fee. Belated recognition was thus given to her work. A commentary in one journal said that "were she a man she would be a world-wide celebrity", and another reviewer suggested that the paintings belonged "on the walls of the Vancouver Art Gallery". In the following year and in 1952, the Vancouver Art Gallery did hold further exhibitions of her work. But these were to be the last exhibitions during Hamilton's lifetime. She died in Vancouver in 1954, aged 81, and was buried in Port Arthur, next to her husband.

During the years since Mary Riter Hamilton's death, a retrospective exhibition of some of her work was held

at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria in 1959 and in 1970 three of her paintings were included in the Centennial Exhibition at Winnipeg, *150 Years of Art in Manitoba*. In 1978, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria held a further exhibition, *Mary Riter Hamilton: 1873-1954*, which consisted of thirty-five works: portraits, landscapes, still-life paintings and sixteen of the battlefield paintings from the collection in the Public Archives.

While Mary Hamilton's life and work is interesting to historians because of what it reveals of academic training and artistic styles of the past, of the differences between European and Canadian approaches to art and of the difficulties Canadian artists faced in being accepted in their own country, it is her battlefield paintings which continue to provide the most interest and speculation. It is hard, for instance, to determine exactly what led her to accept the commission from *The Gold Stripe*. On the one hand there was the patriotism emphasized by the magazine's editors, but on the other there seems to have been a determination on the part of Hamilton to return to France on any terms: to revisit the country where art was appreciated in a manner not yet understood in Canada. In an interview with Anne Anderson Perry, made in February 1919, shortly before her departure for Europe, she discussed these attitudes:

> What about Canadian art? . . . To be quite frank, and I trust not in any way offensively so, there is little encouragement in Canada, more especially in this part of it, for the artist and the dreams of which I was and am guilty . . . .

There was, she felt, "no real feeling among the people generally for the fine arts", in contrast to France where, in spite of the war, a love for art remained:

> Poor France has been bled and stripped. She is poor as none of us ever thought to see her. But will I find on my return any less a feeling for the fine things of life? On the contrary, I expect to find an enhancement and if there is little money to spend on pictures, there will be at least the interest, the love of beauty, the personal and general appreciation of good work.

It seems likely, then, that it was the possibility of satisfying her desire to return to France to work, as well as the patriotic appreciation of "our gallant Canadians [who] have fought and died", which prompted her to accept *The Gold Stripe* commission. Not only was she capable of recording the devastation of the land she loved, but she was also able to give Canadians a sense of the places where so many of their fellows had died. As one appreciative reviewer of her work wrote in 1959, she "was deeply involved in the fraying emotions of the First World War": her paintings of the battlefields gave their viewers an understanding of a landscape "where the winds blew continuously, even in summer".

Without doubt, Mary Riter Hamilton was well worthy of being included among the "official" war artists. As a woman, however, she would have been obliged to produce work which depicted activity on the "home front" and would not, therefore, have produced her remarkable record of the post-war battlefields. Perhaps Dr. Doughty was right in his assessment that future generations would be more appreciative of her work than those of her own time. Certainly, her work can only serve to emphasize the disaster and futility of war. ♦

The exhibition "No Man's Land: the Battlefield Paintings of Mary Riter Hamilton, 1919-1922", organized by Angela E. Davis and Sarah M. McKinnon, can be seen at the University of Winnipeg Gallery from 5 November to 8 December 1989.

This article is partially excerpted from the author's essay in the exhibition catalogue.

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Our Lost Generation

If the dead gave their lives without bitterness and the living are consoled Canada, the common mother of both, is richer for all time for their sacrifice. In the life of the race a single generation passes like a heart-beat; but the chosen few from this generation, whose names are in the lists of the lost, are secure in their fame and in their power. They have set for all time for Canada the standards of service and of sacrifice; their example will, now and forever, sweeten our civic life and if the occasion calls will nerve the youth of Canada to emulate their deeds on the stricken field. A thousand years from now Canadian youths will read the story of their deeds with hearts uplifted and with kindling eyes. Safe in such an immortality what matters it that they sleep far from Canada upon the battlefields of France!

— **J.W. Dafoe,**
***Over the Canadian Battlefields*, 1919.**

Tipping the Balance

THE CANADIAN CORPS IN 1918

By Stuart Robson

In recent years, historians have examined the impact the Great War of 1914-1918 had on Canada. But what about the reciprocal of this? What impact did Canada have on the war? With so much attention devoted to the attack on Vimy Ridge in April 1917, its sequel, the remarkable achievement of the Canadian Corps in the climax of the war, has been overlooked, aside from Daniel Dancocks' valuable recent book, *Spearhead to Victory: Canada and the Great War*. This omission in the literature leaves the impression that Canada was a spear-carrier rather than a spearhead. Of course, in a broad sense, such a modest view seems sensible. No matter how well led or highly motivated, four divisions cannot possibly tip the balance in a war on the grand scale.

Or can they? Canadian accounts of the war tend to take the overall patterns of the war for granted, and in particular to pass lightly over what was happening in Germany, especially in the final months of the war. This reflects the more general unwillingness to look closely at the history of 1918, a year considered best forgotten even at the time. Because the details of the shocking German plunge from near-victory to catastrophic defeat have either been misconstrued or ignored, the connection between the military situation and the German decision to call for a cease-fire has not been drawn adequately. In other words, to assess the role Canada played in the outcome of the war, we must know something about why the war began, why it continued as it did and especially how and why it ended as it did.

The war did not begin by accident. It began because the major powers in Europe consciously chose violence rather than negotiation to maintain their interests. Because no one goes to war to lose, each power believed that, either on its own or in coalition, it was stronger

Canadian War Museum

Erich Ludendorff: "Brilliant, volatile." Top of page 17: Canadian Artillery in Action, by Kenneth Forbes.

than its rivals, or at least strong enough to achieve through war what it no longer believed it could obtain through negotiation. In short, each power had a different estimate of the distribution of power. Until they once again agreed on who was strong and who weak, they continued to prefer violence. The failure of all the military plans in 1914 encouraged this preference because it left the situation ambiguous, with Germany too strong to consider a negotiated peace and the Entente powers (Britain, France and Russia) for the moment too weak. Germany had won the initial round, but only in a limited way. She still could not persuade France, Britain and Russia that time was not on their side. They in turn had good reason to think that it was.

As it happened, the head of the German High Command in 1914, Erich von Falkenhayn, agreed that time favoured the Allies. He wanted to force a decision as soon as possible. Tactical victories over Russia were easy to come by, but Russia could always trade space for time and wait for her Western allies to win. So Falkenhayn turned to the Western Front. Although he saw Britain as the main enemy, he could not get at British seapower, although he reserved unlimited submarine warfare as a trump card, nor could he reach the British Army, which had yet to arrive in force and was holding the line in Flanders, impossible ground for a major attack. That left France. Falkenhayn decided to attack Verdun, not necessarily to take the complex of fortresses there, but to draw France into its defence, after which German guns would pound the French Army to death. Thus began the longest unbroken battle in history, from February to November 1916. At first, Falkenhayn's strategy worked to perfection. The French lost their great outlying fortresses at Douaumont and Vaux, and, as Falkenhayn hoped, staked everything on defending what they still held on the right bank of the Meuse River, including Verdun itself. But gradually, the same process that bedevilled the Allied commanders overwhelmed Falkenhayn. In his own mind he might have fixed limits to his attack, but set-piece battles on such a colossal scale were beyond finely-tuned control. As the German Army strained to take Verdun, it came in range of French guns on the left bank of the river. To clear away harassing fire from the flanks of their main attacks, the Germans had to broaden these attacks, and the greater their effort, the more the battle degenerated into mutual attrition. Britain complicated Falkenhayn's calculations by launching her own massive attack at the Somme, starting on 1 July 1916. To be sure, the first day at the Somme was a well-planned disaster in which almost 20,000 British soldiers died. But when the Russians broke through Austrian lines in late June, Germany faced cruel pressure on three fronts. With Falkenhayn's original idea of an artfully limited attack in ruins, he was forced to resign. In his place came the winning team from the Eastern Front, Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg was not a simple, elderly figurehead. He possessed a measure of shrewdness and *gravitas* that steadied the German Empire in the perilous years after September 1916. Above all, he stabilized his partner, the brilliant, volatile Erich Ludendorff, whose nominal title was First Quarter-Master General but who in fact became the real head of the Imperial German Army and the dominant force in the state. Ludendorff's fanatical pursuit of total victory and an empire in the east gave his ambitions a distinct resemblance to those of Hitler two decades later. Given the similar result, a total defeat, one might think he was as unbalanced a military leader as Hitler would prove to be. Yet *hubris* did not affect the two men the same way. It was part of Hitler's personality from the start, the gleam to the dark star he followed. It only overtook Ludendorff at the peak of his mercurial career, after diligence and intelligent staff work had raised him from humble origins. So when he took over, his problem was not yet overweening pride, but the refusal of the enemy to concede it was losing. As long as the Allies held on, Germany

Canadian War Museum

Sir Arthur Currie, portrait by Sir William Orpen.

was back to the dilemma Falkenhayn had seen so clearly: she could not win a long war on two fronts, but she could not force the enemy to concede that she had already won a short war on both fronts.

Ludendorff's first move was to wind down the futile battle of Verdun. He then had the Siegfried complex built, an immense system of concrete pillboxes, interlocking fire and barbed wire cutting off the bulge in the Somme front. Known to the Allies as the Hindenburg Line, "Siegfried" reduced the manpower needed to hold the central part of the Western Front and allowed Ludendorff to plan a major offensive in the East. To weaken Russia further, he contrived to import the "bacillus of revolution", Lenin, in a sealed train. Finally, to break the Western allies, he played the trump card Falkenhayn had considered, unlimited submarine warfare. Although this would probably bring America into the war, the German Navy insisted that Britain would capitulate before America could make her power felt.

Just as the war in 1916 had almost conformed to Falkenhayn's stratagems, 1917 went virtually as Ludendorff hoped. Russia succumbed to liberal revolution in February and to Lenin in October; Lenin then bowed to a renewed German offensive and agreed to the punitive Treaty of Brest-Litovsk early in 1918. After Germany renewed unlimited submarine warfare, America declared war in April 1917, but by the end of the year, her change to belligerent status had if anything weakened the Entente powers by siphoning off supplies they would otherwise have received. Colonel Potter of M*A*S*H might remember being in a chateau under fire in 1917, but the record suggests he was a year out. In the spring of 1917, the great French offensive devised by General Robert Nivelle fell on the empty wasteland the Germans had left behind after their stealthy withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line. When the French reached the main German positions, their losses were severe enough to trigger a mutiny among most of the divisions in the zone of war. Ostensibly to relieve pressure on the French, but probably to force a British-made decision, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig launched the Third Battle of Ypres at the end of July — literally launched it too, because of the torrential rains at the start, which swamped a battlefield already turned into a morass by heavy shelling. The ensuing ordeal, summed up in the ominous word "Passchendaele", might have had a point had the Australian-led attacks of its middle phase been its terminus. Ludendorff reacted to the massive artillery shoots and sophisticated infantry attacks of General Sir Herbert Plumer's Third Army with almost visceral pain. But the rains returned in October and, against

Kaiser Wilhelm, dressed for battle.

Imperial War Museum

Canadian troops of the Second Division carry duckboards toward Passchendaele, 6 November 1917. Prisoners and wounded can be seen coming in.

the advice of his field commanders, Haig decided to push on to higher ground. With the Australian Corps exhausted, he gave the leading role to his other shock troops, the Canadians. Somehow they succeeded in taking Passchendaele. How they did it beggars belief; why they had to is even harder to fathom. By the time 1918 dawned, the only limit to the apparently endless war of attrition that most observers could see was the finite reserve of able-bodied manpower. With America mobilizing faster than the Germans expected but slower than the Allies hoped, time still ran against Germany. In the short run, however, Ludendorff had one great advantage. He now faced only one important front, and he had the added manpower and new techniques to end the stalemate in the trenches and force the enemy to capitulate.

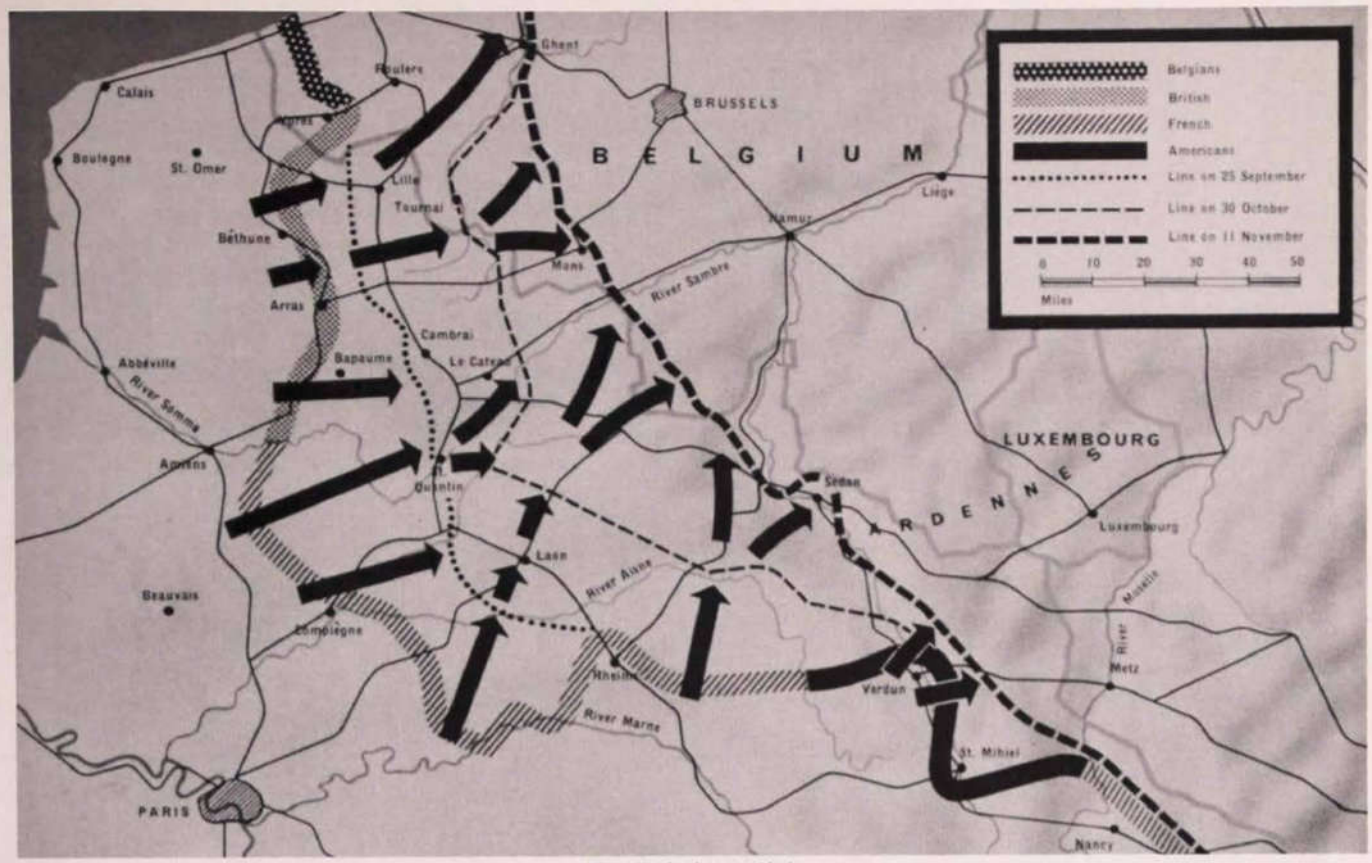
Ludendorff launched Operation Michael on 21 March 1918, sending 76 divisions mainly against the understrength British Fifth Army, which was in the St. Quentin area recovering from Passchendaele. First in March and again in April, he ruptured the first and second zones and broke into the British rear. Preceded by precise artillery fire and led by storm troopers trained to flow around pockets of resistance, the Germans brought back open warfare for the first time since late 1914.

Ludendorff's plan was to split the British from the French and force them to fold back to the Channel coast, like a giant door hinging on Flanders. When instead the British shoulder held north of the main German attack, Ludendorff switched to Flanders. Again the attack began well, but again it bogged down. Ludendorff had the idea of deep penetration, but in 1918 he did not have the means to achieve it. His flowing attack depended entirely on foot soldiers and artillery to sustain its momentum. He could break in and through, but not out.

By July, Ludendorff was winning his way to defeat. His attacks devoured the best of his troops, especially those in the almost suicidal storm troop battalions. Unrest bordering on revolution was stirring in Austria-Hungary and even in Germany, where munition workers had staged a general strike in January. The bacillus of revolution he had planted in Russia was beginning to infect Germany as surely as the Spanish flu virus was starting to devastate the entire world. Ideology in turn paled beside hunger as an incentive to protest, and by 1918, the collapse of the German railway system, the inability of her political system to ration food equitably, and the British blockade were together reducing the war economy to a shambles.

In German war diaries, we can follow the gradual withering of Ludendorff's great offensives, even while the German Army was advancing. Like the nation as a whole, the Army was starving; the advance at times halted when even the elite storm troopers looted British

Hindenburg (left) and Ludendorff: Partners in power.



The Allied advance, 1918.

supplies of food and liquor. As the Germans went forward, they moved into the Somme battlefields of 1916, devastated ground that favoured the defence and prevented supplies from keeping up with the advance. Moreover, the regular line troops were now moving in the open. After adapting to trench war, they felt vulnerable and tended to dig in just out of habit. But often they had a good reason to take cover, because moving out of the trenches exposed them to a danger they had hitherto been able to ignore: attacks from the air. The Allied air forces flew strafing runs and contact patrols around the clock, and along with isolated gun batteries, had a field day. Above all, as the battle wore on, the Germans finally used up the cream of the Imperial Army, the NCO's and experienced rankers who had survived the Allied offensives because of their inimitable professional skill.

Throughout the late spring and early summer, Ludendorff kept launching fresh attacks in his desperate effort to bring the enemy to terms, but even though the goal of each new attack was defined more precisely and realistically, he could not regain the initiative. Thrashing about for the enemy weak-point, he attacked the French at Rheims. Pétain however parried the Rheims attack easily, without calling for reserves as Ludendorff hoped. Confused about what to do next, Ludendorff decided to attack in Flanders as a diversion. Before he could try another expedient, the French clarified the situation. On 18 July fifteen French and four American divisions, with 500 tanks, broke through the German line at Villers-Cotterets and pushed the Germans back almost ten kilometres.

When Ludendorff realized that the Franco-American victory jeopardized all the territory in the Marne salient that Germany had won since March, he asked the Flanders Army Group to send its Chief of Staff, General Fritz von Lossberg, along for a conference. Lossberg was a legend to veterans of the Western Front because of his inspired handling of the defence at the Somme. He had been sceptical about the March offensive from the moment it had first been proposed. In virtually unnoticed memoirs that appeared in 1941, Lossberg recalled that Ludendorff seemed overwrought and "*frontfremd*" or estranged from the front. He admitted to Lossberg that a strategic retreat to the Hindenburg Line would have made sense, but was impossible for "political reasons", which turned out to mean his own prestige and that of the Army. In summing up his experience with High Command, Lossberg placed the blame for Germany's military catastrophe squarely on Ludendorff.

Colonel Mertz von Quirnheim, attached to the Bavarian General Staff and a close colleague of Ludendorff, recorded a bizarre conversation around this time. Ludendorff told him that the Marne Salient could not be held, and went on to say:

The Canadians Enter Cambrai, 1918. Painting by Inglis Sheldon-Williams.

"I am not superstitious, or well, maybe I am. Look, on July 15 I had no confidence [in the attack on Rheims]". With that he opened the right drawer on his desk and took out a rather battered prayer-book of the [Moravian] Brotherhood. He read me the Scripture given in it for July 15. He contrasted it to the passages on our other days of attack . . . We spoke seriously for quite a while. I was really very moved. Excellency took leave with the words "I hope the Good God will not desert us"; I answered that He surely would not. Excellency quite broken.

It ill behooves fellow countrymen of Mackenzie King to sneer about superstition in high places. Self-confidence, however, is especially important in questions of command, and realizing that Ludendorff was deriving his self-confidence from the German equivalent of bird entrails must have had a devastating impact on the officers at headquarters. Mertz worried that Ludendorff was afraid people would say he had lost his nerve. Because of this fear, he might be prone to expose the Army to fatal risks. By 29-31 July, Mertz noted in his diary that Ludendorff had gradually calmed down, putting Villers-Cotterets behind him, but "the collapse of nerve even so has not been exactly glorious".

The worst was yet to come. The British had their own elite storm troopers, the Australians and Canadians. The Canadian Corps was relatively untouched by the German onslaught in the spring and so was fresh and fully-manned. Moreover, its four divisions had grown used to working together, so that it had the flexibility of a division but the size of a corps — in effect, it was a super-division. Led by the two Dominion Corps, on 8 August General Rawlinson's Fourth Army crashed through the depleted German Second Army near Amiens. The panic among German troops that had dismayed Ludendorff on 18 July was repeated on a more alarming scale, with retiring troops accusing reinforcements of strike-breaking and prolonging the war. To Ludendorff, 8 August was "the black day of the German Army in the history of this war".

PASSCHENDAELE
POPERINGHE
YPRES
MOUNT SORREL
ST. ELOI
WYTSCHAETE
BELGIUM
CASSEL
MESSINES
MENIN
DENDRE RIVER
BAILLEUL
ST. OMER
HAZELBROUCK
ARMENTIERES
LYS R.
LILLE
AIRE
Canal
TOURNAI
ATH
FESTUBERT
BÉTHUNE
LA BASSÉE
GIVENCHY
Hill 70
Canal
MONS
LENS
LIÉVIN
SCARPE RIVER
ST. POL
DOUAI
MALAQUET
VIMY
VIMY RIDGE
VALENCIENNES
BAVAI
ARRAS
Canal
R.
MAUBEUGE
Canal du Nord
ESCAUT
FRANCE
CAMBRAI
DOULLENS
AVESNES
BAPAUME
LE CATEAU
ANCRE R.
ACHEUX
COURCELETTE
POZIÈRES
OISE R.
THE WESTERN FRONT
ALBERT
SOMME R.
AMIENS
PÉRONNE
AMIENS
THE SOMME BATTLES
ST. QUENTIN
AVRE RIVER
OISE R.
SERRE RIVER
0 5 10 15 Mi.
0 5 10 15 20 Km

The Last Days: the Canadians advance from Valenciennes to Mons, from a painting by Inglis Sheldon-Williams.

When Ludendorff met the Kaiser on 13 August, he admitted the war was lost and offered his resignation. The Kaiser rejected the offer. Privately, Ludendorff told the new Foreign Secretary, Admiral Paul von Hintze, that his earlier assurances of victory no longer applied and that he was unsure of what was coming. Hintze thought that even this belated and humbling admission was too optimistic, especially when to military adversity was added the news that Austria-Hungary was about to sue for peace.

Ludendorff was on a rack. Professionalism and success had brought him far beyond his bourgeois origins, but one sign of fallibility would send him back to obscurity. He had staked everything on his spring offensive. When tactical success did not translate into strategic advantage and the enemy was no closer to submission, he sensed that fortune had deserted him. Commanders are under intense stress at the best of times. Haig coped with the pressure by placing everything in the hands of his Presbyterian God, keeping the obscenity of war well clear of his headquarters, and blaming Lloyd George and the politicians, or "the frocks", for anything that went wrong. Ludendorff had his prayer book but no equivalent to Lloyd George. The victory that had beckoned would have been in his name alone; the defeat that now loomed would also be his. Rather than admit that he and Germany were cornered, he kept up the habits that had brought success: prodigious working hours, an obsession with detail and a rigid, impassive exterior. But with all his will turned to the effort of keeping up a bold front, Ludendorff was unable to carry out his main duty. He could not face the situation he had created. The civilian government, and Hintze in particular, pleaded for a straight report on the military situation. But how could Ludendorff tell mere civilians what he almost refused to admit to himself? At most, he would concede that the chance of military victory was now uncertain. That much was obvious to everyone. What the government needed to know was how well a defensive struggle might go, but that was the sort of losing game that Ludendorff would not play. So, as he stayed locked in the prison of his own mind, Germany lost whatever slim chance she might have had to organize a firm defence along the

Hindenburg Line and put out careful feelers for a negotiated peace. Hintze in August thought that Ludendorff's private remark had authorized him to sound out the Queen of the Netherlands to serve as an intermediary, but, lacking any clear appreciation of the military picture, he did not want to let a premature request for good offices inspire rumours that Germany was finished. Such rumours would only inflame enemy hopes and destroy German morale. So Hintze waited. With a whole world waiting too, he was not alone.

From the point when the twin disasters of 18 July and 8 August revealed both the probability of defeat and Ludendorff's nervous exhaustion, factions began to form among the staff officers at General Headquarters. Ludendorff's protege, Colonel Bauer, saw that his boss was cracking up under the pressure and brought in a young officer to take over some of the paper work. The new assistant, Colonel Heye, turned out to be more than a clerk; in fact, he soon became the key man in the effort to get rid of Ludendorff and put the Kaiser and the government fully in touch with the military situation. Early in September, Heye took over the Operations Division from Colonel Wetzell, but not before Wetzell heard Ludendorff blandly insist that the Foreign Office and Hintze must be deceived about the military crisis or else they would become too anxious. Horrified at the implications of such a cover-up, Wetzell brought in an Army psychiatrist, Dr. Hochheimer, hoping that the doctor would find reasons of health to ease Ludendorff out of command. According to the diary of Colonel Mertz, Dr. Hochheimer diagnosed overwork, loss of buoyancy and enervation. Ludendorff took this miracle of scientific diagnosis in good stride, saying that he had reached the same conclusions himself. Dr. Hochheimer prescribed a regime of breathing exercises, walks, massages, shorter hours, longer sleeps and singing German folk-songs upon ris-

Bringing up ammunition through the dry bed of Canal du Nord, 1918.

Canadian "shock-troops" behind the lines, January 1917.

ing. He also suggested that headquarters be shifted to the aptly-named Belgian town of Spa. Later he even threw in a spot of hypnosis. Wetzell's ploy had failed and he was on his way out.

Heye drew together a group of dissident officers that used private contacts with the Kaiser's entourage and the Foreign Office to undermine Ludendorff. On 25 September, when he ordered all Army Groups not to retreat an inch, Heye simply discontinued the order. He urged Ludendorff to go to Berlin, tell the Kaiser and Hintze just how dangerous the situation really was and have them request negotiations for an armistice. Ludendorff refused, but later that day, in conversation with the Surgeon General, Dr. Schjerning, he learned that what he had believed to be an outbreak of pulmonary plague in the French Army was in fact the Spanish influenza that had hit Central Europe earlier. "I clung to this news [of the plague] like a drowning man to a straw", the distraught Ludendorff told Schjerning, who was so alarmed by such irrationality that he reported the conversation to Heye and Mertz. These two called a meeting of the Heye group for the following morning. At it, they decided to summon the Foreign Secretary to Spa. One of the officers present, Lersner, was delegated to telephone Hintze and tell him that the military situation was critical.

Hintze did not need Lersner's message to guess what was happening. He had written off Ludendorff as an incurable optimist since August and had been relying since then on his own sources of information. He and the officials in the Foreign Office had prepared the machinery for cautious peace feelers, but the whole plan waited upon the frank admission by the Army that the military situation was grave. To act in advance of such an admission might shatter the morale of the Army; to act too late, to wait until the chance of collapse became a reality, would open the way to anarchy and revolution.

Lersner's message thus conveyed to Hintze something other than what the Heye group intended. They thought he was entirely in the dark and should know that a military collapse was a possibility in the long run. He *knew* what 8 August had meant and assumed that the telephone call from the staff officers was hinting about some specific military reverse that had just occurred or soon would. Hintze hurried along to see

the ancient Chancellor, Count Hertling, and begged him to go to Spa to find out what on earth was happening. Hertling refused, and so, early on 28 September, Hintze decided to go himself to bring the situation to a head. Then Hertling told him that they would both go. Hertling had changed his mind because he had spoken to the Vice-Chancellor, Friedrich von Payer. Payer in turn had just learned from his close friend, the Progressive Reichstag deputy Conrad Haussmann, that the co-ordinating committee of the left-wing majority in the Reichstag had decided that Hertling must be replaced by a government enjoying the confidence of the Reichstag, a government pledged to peace and reform. But just when Hertling decided to bow to the Reichstag majority and resign, word arrived from Spa that Hindenburg and Ludendorff wanted to talk to him about forming a new government. Unknown to anyone in Berlin, Ludendorff had decided that the game was over, and that the parliamentary politicians would be just the people to take all the blame for losing.

What then had happened on or about 28 September to change Ludendorff's mind and admit openly what he had privately conceded for six weeks? A Franco-American attack had gone well in the Argonne on 26 September; on the 28th, Bulgaria sued for peace, opening the way for the Allied forces in Salonika to move up the Danubian basin. Above all, on 27 September General Sir Arthur Currie's Canadian Corps, working as part of the British First Army under General Sir Henry Horne, forced the Canal du Nord. The brilliant set-piece attack was the only real success on the day, proving the formidable threat German defences still posed, especially the machine-gunners. But it also showed that the entire line was vulnerable, a verdict confirmed on 28 September when the British Second Army and the Belgians attacked around Ypres. Ludendorff was caught between the rampaging Canadians and the British advance in Flanders. He did not have the manpower to stop both. To be sure, Germany still occupied more territory than she had the year before, still had a solid and seasoned army of two and a half million men, still enjoyed powerful defensive positions, and still faced an enemy that had only begun to operate mass armies offensively and was almost as exhausted as Germany. There was no general Allied advance in the Great War. If victory was out of the question for Germany, the alternative to victory, even at this late hour, need not have been total defeat. A negotiated peace, reflecting the stalemate still prevailing, if barely, was still possible. It required a defensive military strategy and canny diplomacy. Both these requirements, however, depended on the mind and nerve of the commander. But on 28 September, Ludendorff simply broke down.

After Heye had begun the process of calling in the politicians by putting Lersner in touch with Hintze, he told Ludendorff that the Foreign Secretary would

Daily Mirror Photograph

First line field hospital, somewhere on the Western Front.

be coming to Spa. Heye and his supporters then set to work convincing Hindenburg that the Army must finally ask the government to open negotiations. Realizing he was without supporters, feeling the panic of July and August return, despite massage, folk songs and hypnosis, Ludendorff lashed out at his subordinates. He screamed that the Kaiser was a weakling, that the Navy was to blame, that he was beset by treachery and deception. His voice shrill and hoarse, his fists clenched, he let hysteria wash over him; around 4:00 in the afternoon, literally foaming at the mouth, he collapsed. To be sure, reports of his paralysis and collapse were later denied, but all the reports came from eye-witnesses and the denials from Ludendorff partisans who were not present.

By 6:00 p.m., Ludendorff had recovered sufficiently to make his way to Hindenburg's room. He told Hindenburg that the collapse of the Balkan Front had convinced him that the defence of Germany was about to unravel. The government must therefore offer peace and request an armistice. Apparently shaken by Ludendorff's earlier behaviour, Hindenburg agreed. We will never know for certain what was actually the last straw for Ludendorff, but the timing of events and the secondary importance of the Bulgarian collapse makes it more likely that the combined victories of the Canadians at the Canal du Nord and the British in Flanders were the key blows, and of these two, it was the compact and inexorable advance of the Canadians that was the more intimidating.

Starting on 8 August, the Canadian Corps met and defeated 47 divisions, a quarter of the German Army. Currie later took this as proof that the Germans acted as if stopping the Canadians meant stopping everything. If so, we can see why the Canadian success at the Canal du Nord on 27 September might have loomed so large in the mind of Ludendorff. In playing such a disproportionate role in the defeat of Germany, the Corps necessarily ran up a sobering rate of casualties, almost 46,000 dead, wounded and missing between 8 August and 11 November, or 20 percent of the total Canadian losses in the war. In citing these figures, Daniel Dancocks has rightly insisted that the Canadians took a decisive part in the victorious campaign of the British Army. In the first instance, however, it is the losers who decide who wins a war, and in coming to a decision that the power of the enemy is greater than their own, they are the ones who must assess what is the most effective threat they face.

Examining what Ludendorff made of the situation and how he reacted does not tell us whether it was the Canadians in particular who broke his will to carry on. Given the complexity of a total war lasting well over four years, such a bold claim would be simplistic. Nor can it be verified; Ludendorff began the notorious "stab in the back" legend at the very moment he demanded a new government that could obtain a ceasefire. As he told his intimate staff, "Those who prepared the soup should eat it". His malign effort to evade responsibility not only weakened the later German Republic, but muddied the waters sufficiently to prevent historians from penetrating the fog of war around his headquarters. Still, when one puts the achievements of the Canadian Corps in the last hundred days beside Ludendorff's increasingly desperate reactions, one can make at least a circumstantial claim that the Canadians tipped the balance. ◆

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Coming of Age

Canada, not forced by any law or rule has voluntarily taken part in this war, placing herself in opposition to great powers. Canada has stepped into nationhood. No longer can we play the part of minors, who cannot transact our own business. Hereafter we shall not be allowed by the great nations of the world to put ourselves in that position. They will say that if we can make war we can do our own business and give our own answers to their questions.

— Clifford Sifton, 1915

Home Sweet Home

There's a little wet home in the trench,
That the rain storms continually drench,
A dead cow close by, with her hooves in the sky,
And she gives off a beautiful stench.
Underneath us, in place of a floor,
Is a mess of cold mud and some straw,
And the Jack Johnsons roar as they speed through the air
O'er my little wet home in the trench.

— Canadian Song

SOLDIERS OF THE EMPIRE

The Yukon at War

By William R. Morrison
and Kenneth S. Coates

On the evening of 4 August 1914, the citizens of Dawson City were enjoying a theatre party, hosted at the Dawson Amateur Athletic Association theatre by George Black, the Commissioner of the Yukon Territory. During an intermission Black was handed a telegram, which he read aloud: "England is in a state of war with Germany". There was a shocked silence, then the local detachment of the Royal North West Mounted Police, dressed in scarlet for the occasion, leapt to their feet and began to sing "God Save the King". Martha Black, the commissioner's energetic and ultra-patriotic wife, described the reaction from the rest of the audience:

> The effect was electrical. With one move, the audience was on its feet, and never in the world, I dare say, was our national anthem sung with greater fervour or more depth of feeling than in that moving picture house in that little town on the rim of the Arctic. Although 8,000 miles of mountain, land, and sea separated us from London, the heart of the Empire, yet England's King was our King, and England's Empire was our Empire. We realized as never before that we were not English, nor Irish, nor Scotch, nor Welsh, nor yet Canadian, but *British*, bound together by the Anglo-Saxon ties of blood.

It would have been quite understandable if the people of the Yukon had simply ignored the rapidly spreading conflagration in Europe. They were, as Martha Black noted, thousands of miles from the battlefront, and even farther removed from the continent's diplomatic and political quarrels. The Klondike had once held centre stage, but the region had fallen on hard times, all but ignored now that the famously rich gravels of Eldorado and Bonanza Creeks had been largely worked out.

The Yukon in 1914 was a society far gone in decline. After the initial excitement of the gold rush ended in 1899, the world's attention followed the gold-seekers out of the Territory, to the shores of Nome and the diggings in Alaska's Tanana valley. In the Yukon, signs of decay could be seen everywhere by 1914: in the scores of abandoned homes, collapsing stores and warehouses, rusting equipment, and once-expensive city lots overgrown in summer with the thick and heavy grasses of the Dawson flood plain.

The call to arms, issued by Sam Hughes, the erratic and controversial Minister of Militia, struck a responsive chord in the Yukon, where a number of factors — continued economic decay, Yukoners' desire to make Canadians take notice of them, and a strong affinity for the British Empire — combined to produce an enthusiastic response. Several hundred young men immediately rushed to enlist for overseas service. Some, no doubt, simply seized the occasion to escape the Yukon. A number of others were members of militia units in southern Canada and wished to join their comrades in the rush to the battlefields of Europe. Between 100 and 200 Yukoners volunteered in the first days of the war, to be joined by several hundred more who left the Yukon Territory by the end of 1914 to sign up in the south. One Royal North West Mounted Police constable, denied permission to sign up, even after he had offered to purchase his discharge, asked his superior officer if he would be chased if he decided to desert.

Yukon Archives

Berlin or bust: The Yukon machine-gunners off on the great adventure, their uniforms decorated with gold provided by Joe Boyle.

Members of the Mounted Police were particularly anxious to enlist. One of these was George Pearkes, a young Englishman who had come to Canada in 1906 and joined the RNWMP in 1913. After his recruit training, Pearkes was sent to the Yukon; when war broke out, he was stationed at Carcross. He immediately applied for permission to purchase his discharge from the force. Twelve of the 40 police in the Yukon were reservists in the British Army; these men were given discharges and left the Territory immediately, so Pearkes was forced to wait his turn. He chafed for months, until in February 1915 he was allowed to leave the force. He went to Vancouver and joined the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, beginning a military career that was to last 30 years and bring him a national reputation and the honour of a Victoria Cross, won for conspicuous bravery at Passchendaele.

The government and employers moved quickly to remove roadblocks to enlistment. Civil servants were granted leave with pay while on active duty, and mining regulations, which required a mine owner to work his claim part of each year, were waived for all military personnel until six months after the war. As many as 2,300 Yukoners volunteered for military service during the war — a third of the total population and more than three times the next highest per capita rate (Manitoba). While the scale of enlistment demonstrates the dominance of single men in the Yukon, it is also graphic evidence of the Yukon's enthusiasm for the war.

Joe Boyle, the Yukon's leading mining promoter, coordinated the best-known contribution of manpower to the Canadian forces. A native of Woodstock, Ontario, Boyle came to the Yukon during the gold rush and made his fortune. A former professional boxer, he was in 1914 the Yukon's richest citizen and a great patriot. Shortly after war broke out, he organized a machine gun company of 54 men and paid $50,000 out of his own pocket to outfit them. The Yukon Machine Gun Company left Dawson City by steamer on 10 October 1914, after a wild community demonstration:

> No such turnout and enthusiasm have prevailed in Klondike at any other time since the halcyon days when this camp swarmed with tens of thousands of adventurers who came in the first rush for gold . . . . At 9 o'clock in the evening [of 12 October 1914] . . . the troop assembled . . . . A finer looking body of men never before was assembled north of fifty-three . . . . The boys proposed three cheers for the people of Dawson and yelled mightily. Then they gave three ringing cheers and a tiger for Joe Boyle, and many more for Joe . . . . With the exciting exhaust of steam, the kicking up of a foamy wake by the whirring wheel, the streaming of sparks and

a column of smoke into the starry sky, the screaming of the steamer's whistle and the jostling of the dancing waves against the shore, the scene was one of superb climax to the departure of the pride of Yukon.

Boyle, who longed to accompany his men to France, was considered too old at 49 for a field command. The Yukon contingent became part of the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles, and then the Eaton Motor Machine Gun Brigade, while Boyle went on to an extraordinary freelance military and diplomatic career in Russia and Romania.

The Yukon machine gun company performed well in Europe: all of the original officers were awarded military crosses, 24 of the enlisted men received military medals and one man received a D.C.M. for conspicuous bravery at Passchendaele. Yukoners enthusiastically claimed these men as their own: the *Whitehorse Star* observed, "Had they not been of such splendid stuff they would not have deserved to be known as Yukoners . . . weaklings do not penetrate the Arctic frontier."

In August 1916 George Black, the Yukon's 44-year-old commissioner, resigned his post and petitioned for permission to recruit a second Yukon contingent. Although he managed to fill the ranks of the 17th Machine Gun Company, enthusiasm for war had abated somewhat, no doubt cooled by news of the horrors of trench warfare. Black called on the young men of the Yukon to see their duty and respond to the call:

> You cannot fail to realize that it is the duty of every able-bodied man in Canada, who is not supporting helpless dependents, to offer his services to fight for the Empire in this great crisis. That Yukon has done well, that many of her Men have gone, that Yukon women are doing their duty, does not relieve you. It is a matter of individual manhood. Each must decide for himself whether or not he will play the part of a man. We have remained at home in safety while others have been fighting our battles for over two years, although no more obligated to do so than you or I have been. They have, for us, in many cases, made the supreme sacrifice. They are calling to you and to me for help. Are we going to fail them, or will you come with us?

George Black got his men, and he and 275 Yukoners headed off to battle. They were accompanied by Martha Black who, at the age of 50, crossed the Atlantic on a troop carrier, the only woman among 2,000 men, and remained in England, where she worked tirelessly on behalf of Canadian soldiers.

As George Black had observed, patriotism was not limited to those who volunteered for military service. Yukon women, prevented from shouldering arms for the Empire, sought other means of demonstrating their loyalty. The women participated in traditional ways — rolling bandages, knitting socks, and supplying tobacco and other "comforts" to the men overseas. Working through such organizations as the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire, they also sought to mould public opinion in the Territory, serving as tireless propagandists for the Allied cause. I.O.D.E. chapters in Dawson City, Mayo and Whitehorse presented school prizes for student essays on patriotic themes, raised large sums for Belgian relief, and wrapped Christmas presents for the troops. The Whitehorse chapter, meeting in December 1915, opened with a reading of patriotic verse:

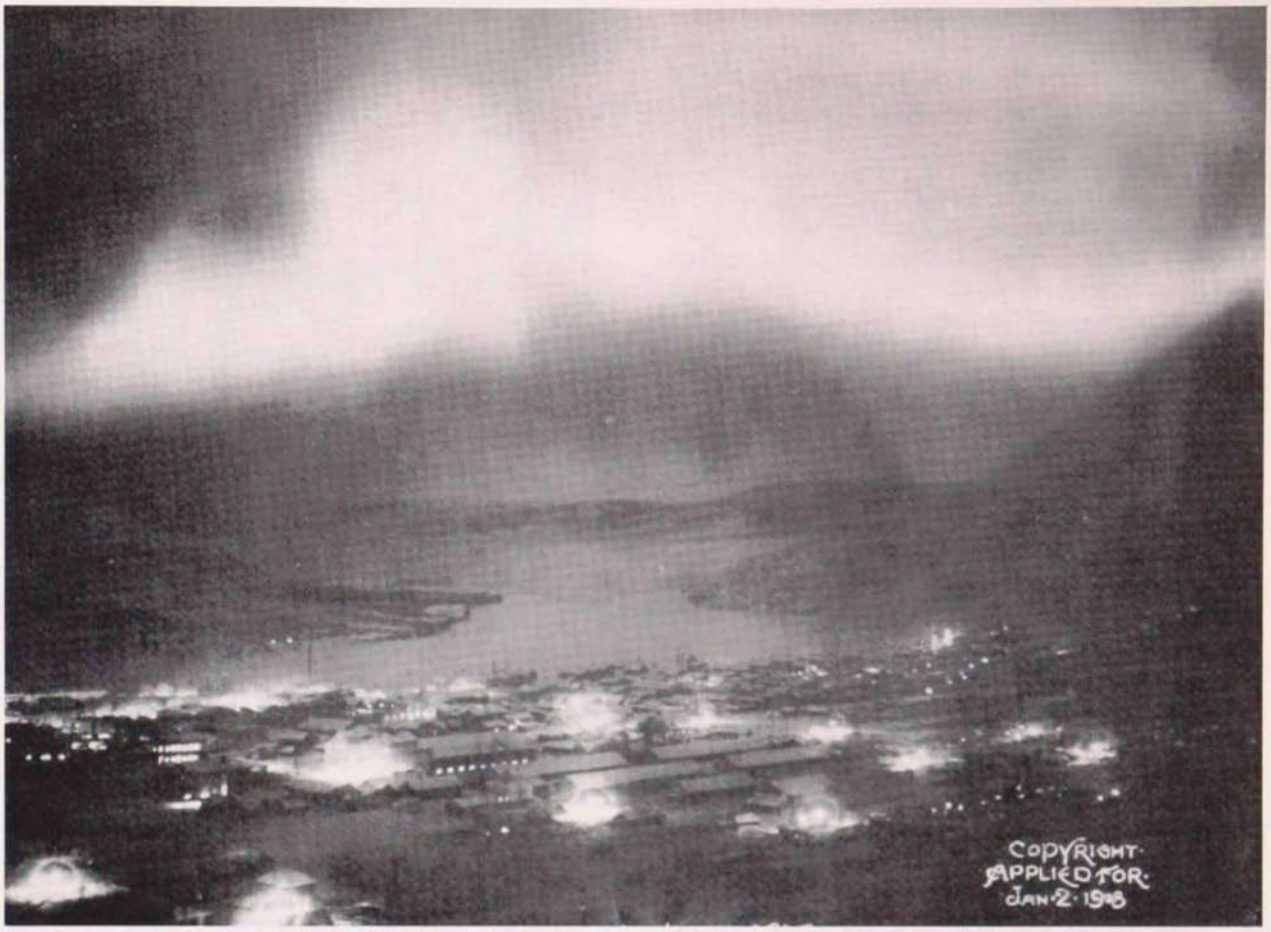
National Archives of Canada

Martha Black joined the Yukoners at sea, the only woman among 2,000 men. Her husband George and her son were also aboard. Martha spent the war years in England working as a volunteer for the war effort.

> *So that tyranny will fall*
> *Canada will give her all;*
> *With her dearest she will part*
> *For the cause that stirs her heart.*
> *Take this message to the Huns,*
> *Canada's behind the guns.*

The assembled women then received a hundred copies of a pro-war pamphlet entitled *Why Don't You Wear a Uniform?* which they distributed in town.

The I.O.D.E. did more than talk about the war. The George M. Dawson branch raised $6,000 towards the purchase of a hospital ship. In August 1915, Commissioner Black asked the Whitehorse chapter to



RCMP Museum

Dawson City with the Aurora Borealis a few years before the war. Though few in numbers, Yukoners made a significant contribution to the war effort.

contribute money for the purchase of a machine gun for the Yukon Machine Gun detachment. They raised $1,000, which matched a similar donation from the government employees, providing enough for the purchase of two guns.

Patriotic fervour was, in the Yukon as elsewhere, remarkably widespread. Virtually every social, political, cultural and athletic gathering held in the Yukon became a patriotic and fund-raising event. Whatever hesitations the men of military age might have had, support for the war effort did not diminish among the rest of the population. The ladies of the I.O.D.E. prayed at every meeting for an early end to the war, but they desperately wanted it to end with an Allied victory, and they fulminated against the Hun right up to Armistice day.

Yukoners were intensely proud of the fact that per capita contributions of cash to the war effort from their isolated region exceeded those from Canada as a whole, and usually by a wide margin. The Canadian Patriotic Fund, one of the more important of the war-relief organizations, reported in June 1916 that Yukoners had given $62,000 to the fund, or $8 per capita; the Canadian average was about $1. Contributions to the Red Cross followed a similar pattern; Yukoners donated $2 per capita, four times the Ontario rate, five times the rate on the Prairies, and forty times that of Quebec. War bond drives were also welcomed with remarkable enthusiasm. In the fall of 1918, the government announced a new drive with a target of $25,000 for the Whitehorse area. That figure was reached on the second day of the sale, and the final total exceeded $70,000.

World War I sent a number of bandwagons careering through Canadian society. Long-debated issues, such as women's suffrage and the prohibition of alcohol, gained new currency from the patriotic rhetoric of war. Although the issue of female suffrage had generated little interest before the war, a memorial on the subject reached Yukon Territorial Council in April 1917; council quickly granted women the right to vote (women in Manitoba had received the vote a year earlier). Yukoners were less enthusiastic about the

prohibition movement. Many other Canadians, anxious to participate, if only vicariously, in the sacrifices of war, voted to deny themselves the pleasures of the cup. Not so in the Yukon. Although the Territory was intensely patriotic, the use of alcohol was too deeply ingrained in the social fabric to be uprooted — even in the cause of thrashing the Kaiser. A plebiscite held in September 1916 on the question of Territorial prohibition saw the "wets" win over the "drys", although by only three votes out of over 1,700 cast.

The Yukon was also involved, with a uniquely northern twist, in the great Unionist election of 1917. Conservative Prime Minister Robert Borden had constructed a Unionist alliance with pro-conscription Liberals and called a December 1917 election. The Yukon contest was scheduled for the end of January 1918, more than a month after the national vote. The Yukon's sitting member, Conservative Alfred Thompson, was nominated as a Unionist. But to the confusion of voters, F.T. Congdon, former Commissioner, longtime Liberal and political gadfly, returned to the Yukon and declared himself also to be a Unionist candidate. The situation was further complicated by the provisions of the Military Voters' Act, which permitted the government to assign soldiers' votes to the constituencies of their choosing. Congdon's supporters suggested that the military votes be divided evenly; Thompson, the "official" Unionist, refused.

The resulting campaign was nasty. Thompson was accused of patronage abuses and Congdon of opportunism — both with good reason. When the ballots were counted, Congdon won, 776 to 666 — not a large total vote for a Member of Parliament, but a considerable turnout for a territory with a non-native population of about 2,500. But in a ludicrous finale, the election outcome was soon turned on its head. Faced with the conflicting claims to Unionist support, the House of Commons voted to confirm Thompson as the official Unionist candidate, and to grant him 111 soldiers' votes. Congdon's 110-vote victory had been turned into a loss by a single vote, cast by a Canadian soldier in England or France.

The unquestioned zeal and commitment of the Yukon, which they repeatedly claimed was unmatched in Canada, ironically served to hasten the Territory's decay. The departure of most of the Yukon's young men, who left for military service or jobs in the southern defence factories, strangled the Yukon economy. Where, in times of war, could one find replacements for the men who operated the gold dredges and river

Joe Boyle's recruits ready to face the Hun, October 1914.

steamers? The head of Canadian Klondyke complained that all the good workers had left, leaving only slackers and whiners. Equipment shortages were endemic, forcing further reductions in dredging activity. The Boyle Company, leaderless with Boyle away in Europe, collapsed into receivership.

The federal government, battling to cut expenditures, took note of the Yukon's continued decline, and decided, with no consultation with the people of the Territory, that the area had too much government. In 1918, the position of commissioner was abolished, replaced by a controller, who was a sort of chief clerk for the Territory. The Territorial Council was abolished, only to be reinstated on a reduced, three-member basis following protests from Dawson. The Yukon's already miniscule portion of the federal budget was cut in half, and a number of federal offices closed. Its political structures were in full retreat, saved only by a desperate struggle in the last days of a war that territorial residents had done everything to support.

For both Yukoners and Alaskans, there was one final cruel blow, this one coming only days before the Armistice. On 23 October 1918, the *Princess Sophia*, a Canadian Pacific steamship, departed from Skagway, Alaska, for Vancouver carrying over 250 passengers from the Yukon River basin — prominent citizens, seasonal migrants, rich and poor, soldiers, riverboat crews and a number of people departing the North forever. At 2:00 a.m. on the 24th, the ship ran on to Vanderbilt Reef and stuck fast. A flotilla from Juneau rushed to the scene, but weather prevented a rescue. At 5 p.m. on 25 October, frantic wireless messages announced the impending doom of the ship and its passengers. When the rescue boats reached Vanderbilt Reef the next morning, all that remained above water was 20 feet of mast. The passengers and crew — 343 people in all — were dead. By a hideous irony, the *Princess Alice*, carrying the bodies of close to 200 victims, arrived in Vancouver on 11 November, the day of the Armistice.

The reaction of Yukoners to World War I was, in many respects, like that of most Canadians: initial enthusiasm, a burst of patriotism flushed with joyful celebrations of Empire, giving way to sorrow and despair as the list of the dead and wounded arrived from France. But for Yukoners, the war presented a special challenge — to prove themselves true Canadians, through their enlistments, charitable donations and total dedication to the war effort. The territory did itself proud, matching or exceeding other areas of Canada in its per capita contribution to the war effort. But there was a cruel irony hidden in that bravado and enthusiasm. Canada did not take particular notice of its far Northwest, and did not single out the district for special treatment. Instead, a cash-starved federal government looked to the Yukon as a potential saving, and cut a swath through the territorial civil service.

Even the number of war dead and wounded from the Yukon is difficult to determine. A great many of the volunteers from the region travelled south to enlist in units raised in Vancouver and other cities. Since few or none of them had been born in the Yukon, when they were wounded or killed they were simply counted with the casualties from other regions. A war memorial in Dawson recorded the names of some of the better-known casualties, but for the rest even the memory was lost by 1918. For Canada as a whole, the war might have served as a catalyst to nationhood, but for the Yukon, it accelerated the process of regional decline. ◆

William R. Morrison was recently appointed Professor of History at the Centre for Northern Studies, Lakehead University. Kenneth S. Coates is in the Department of History, University of Victoria.

Battle Hymns

Far, far from Wipers I long to be,
Where German snipers can't snipe at me.
Damp is my dug-out,
Cold are my feet,
Along came a whizz-bang
To sing me to sleep.

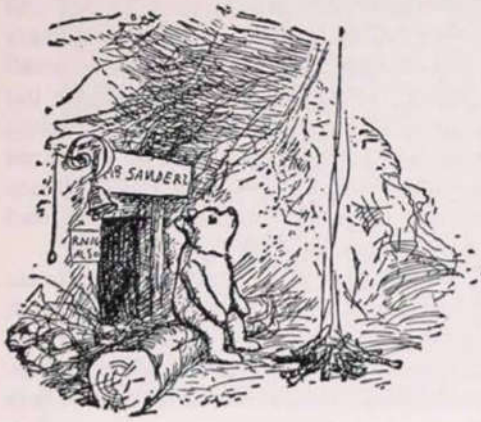
— Sung at Ypres, 1914.

I want to go home,
I want to go home.
I don't want to go up
the line any more,
where bullets and whizz-bangs
they whistle and roar.
Take me over the sea,
where the Allemand can't get at me.
Oh My! I don't want to die!
I want to go home!

— A Soldier's Song

Forward, Joe Soap's Army,
Marching without fear,
With our old commander
Safely in the rear!

— A Soldier's Song



In Which Pooh joins the Army and lands in the Zoo

By Ted Weatherhead

*So when Christopher Robin goes to the Zoo, he goes to where the Polar Bears are, and he whispers something to the third keeper from the left, and doors are unlocked, and we wander through dark passages and up steep stairs, until at last we come to the special cage, and the cage is opened, and out trots something brown and furry, and with a happy cry of "Oh, Bear!" Christopher Robin rushes into its arms. Now this bear's name is Winnie, which shows what a good name for bears it is, but the funny thing is that we can't remember whether Winnie is called after Pooh, or Pooh after Winnie.**

The *really* funny thing is that *nobody*, not even a Heffalump, remembered, not for a *very* long time, that the Winnie whom Pooh was called after, was called after "Winnipeg". And that the original Winnie made her way to the London Zoo from White River, in northern Ontario, hundreds and hundreds of acres away from the Hundred Acre Wood.

This is a war story — and like many war stories only surfaced many years after the actual event, when documents came to public attention. The documents in question were the diaries and letters of a Canadian soldier of World War I.

The soldier — Harry Colebourn — was born in England, but came to Canada in 1905 when he was 18. He became a veterinarian, and settled in Winnipeg in 1912.

When war broke out in 1914, Colebourn was already a militia officer with the Fort Garry Horse, and he immediately joined up on a permanent basis. He was attached to both the Fort Garry Horse and the Canadian Army Veterinary Corps.

It was on a train journey from Winnipeg to Valcartier, Quebec, before going overseas, that Lieutenant Harry Colebourn made a momentous purchase during a whistle stop at the little town of White River in northern Ontario. The purchase is recorded nonchalantly in his diary: "Left Winnipeg August 23rd 1914 for Valcartier at 6:30 p.m. On train overnight. Left Port Arthur 7 a.m. next morning. On train all day Aug. 24. Bought (Winnie) Cub Bear at White River, Amt. paid $20.00."

The seller was a hunter who had killed the mother of the small black female bear cub. Colebourn doesn't say specifically in his diary that he named the cub after the city of Winnipeg, but Harry Colebourn's son, Fred Colebourn, who still lives in Winnipeg, says his father told him Winnie was indeed named after the Manitoba capital.

The lieutenant and the little bear formed an instant, though unlikely, friendship, adjusting together to army life at Valcartier. The cub soon became a general favourite, and when it came time for Colebourn to ship out to England, he was allowed to take Winnie with him.

Colebourn was assigned to the headquarters staff of the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade, stationed on Salisbury Plain. So was Winnie. The bear cub stayed in Colebourn's tent and slept under his bed. Winnie became a sort of mascot, providing a diversion for many of the soldiers on Salisbury Plain during that uncertain autumn of 1914.

* *"The House at Pooh Corner" by A.A. Milne. McClelland and Stewart Ltd, Toronto.*

Harry Colebourn and Winnie, Salisbury Plain.

The soldier's life for Winnie ended in December 1914. She was not allowed to accompany the brigade when it was sent to the battlefields of France. So on 9 December Colebourn turned Winnie over to the London Zoo for safe-keeping, with the intention of reclaiming her after the war.

In civilian life Winnie found her true career, doing her bit to keep up the morale of Londoners as the war grew longer and harder. Records at the London Zoo show that various Canadian regiments presented a total of 5 black bears to the zoo during the first year of the war. But only one, Winnie — tame, friendly, mischievous and playful — became a star attraction for children.

One regular visitor was a little boy, Christopher Robin Milne. His parents gave him a teddy bear for his first birthday. Such was the impression made by the famous London Zoo bear that the teddy was promptly named Winnie after her.

The stuffed bear soon became a dominant figure in the rather lonely child's fantasy life. Christopher Robin's father happened to be the writer A.A. Milne. The father kept a mental file of his son's adventures at the zoo and in the Sussex countryside where the family went for holidays and weekend retreats.

Intrigued by the relationship between his son and the stuffed bear, Milne in 1926 wrote an imaginary account of the exploits of a highly pragmatic small boy and a number of animals of strong opinion but Very Little Brain. The setting was the mysterious Hundred Acre Wood and the protagonist, who lived in this forest under the name of Sanders ("It means he had the name over the door in gold letters, and lived under it") was Winnie-the-Pooh.

The book, *Winnie-the-Pooh,* its sequel, *The House at Pooh Corner,* (1928) and two related volumes of verse, *When We Were Very Young* and *Now We Are Six,* soon became classics for children the world over. And Winnie-the-Pooh became the most famous bear in the world.

The books were illustrated by Ernest Shepard, who became world-renowned as "the man who drew Pooh". His caricatures complemented perfectly Milne's words, and became works of art in their own right.

Meanwhile, the real-life bear after whom Winnie-the-Pooh was named continued delighting visitors at the London Zoo. The London *Daily Express* in 1931 wrote a story about "Winsome Winnie, the dearest, tamest, most affectionate bear in the United Kingdom. Ask to see her — knock at the entrance to her suite, see her open the door herself to walk out. 'Do your daily dozen,' says her keeper. Winnie goes on her back and does her physical jerks. Feel her shoulders. She could crush you to death if she would. But not Winnie! A child can play with her."

What fame achieved by a little bear from the wilds of northern Ontario brought to London by a Winnipeg soldier! Harry Colebourn originally had intended to reclaim Winnie from the London Zoo when the war was over, and bring her back to Canada. His diaries show he would often visit Winnie when on leave from the battle zones in France:

July 8, 1915. In London all day. Visit Zoo in morning and see Winnie.

July 12, 1915. 2 p.m. Went to Zoo. Saw Winnie.

November 27, 1916. In London all day. Go to zoo with Grace and see Winnie. Have tea on Regent Street.

An undated note, accompanied by a photograph, which Colebourn sent to a friend during the war reads: "Myself and Winnie the Bear. Winnie is now on exhibition at the Zoo in London but is coming back to Canada with me some day."

Colebourn, however, changed his mind when the war ended. He decided Winnie should remain in the London Zoo when he saw what an institution she had become to London's citizens. Colebourn returned to

Winnipeg and to his veterinary practice, leaving Winnie behind.

Harry Colebourn's son, Fred, is now 64. Winnie was an institution in his childhood too. He recalls listening to his father's tales about the bear cub, bought in White River, cherished through training camp, and taken overseas and almost all the way to war.

"As a kid I thought it would be great to have a bear as a pet," says Fred Colebourn. "I'd say, 'Why don't you get us one?' He'd say, 'We've a dog and a cat here already,' and he'd try to make me realize a bear is not a usual type of pet."

Fred Colebourn says he enjoyed the Winnie-the-Pooh books as a child, and always knew the Pooh Bear was named after his father's real-life bear. But he says neither he nor his father realized at the time how internationally famous the Pooh books would become. As a young man, Fred Colebourn would get some strange looks any time he mentioned that his father had owned the original Winnie-the-Pooh. Even the young woman he was courting, and who later became his wife, was sceptical. "When we were going together and he told me Winnie-the-Pooh had been his Dad's bear, I thought, 'he's putting me on,' " says Ella Colebourn.

Winnie died in the London Zoo in 1934 at the age of 20, a ripe old age for a bear. Her death rated obituaries in the London newspapers. The *Winnipeg Free Press* carried the news of Winnie's death, along with the story of how Harry Colebourn, Winnipeg veterinary surgeon, brought her to England in 1914 with a brigade of Canadian troops.

In 1981, the London Zoo unveiled a sculpture of Winnie, with a plaque noting that "she gave her name to Winnie-the-Pooh and A.A. Milne and Ernest Shepard gave Winnie-the-Pooh to the world". So far so good. But the plaque, which is still in the London Zoo today, is inaccurate when it further states that the bear was a "mascot of Princess Pats Canadian Regiment".

As Fred Colebourn notes, his father was on the headquarters staff of the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade during Winnie's days on Salisbury Plain. And so it would be more accurate to state the bear was the brigade's mascot rather than that of the Princess Patricias (Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry).

The PPCLI was part of the Second Canadian Infantry Brigade, and some of its members could quite well have been among the soldiers friendly with Winnie on Salisbury Plain. But the Princess Patricias aren't claiming that Winnie was their mascot. Members of the regiment two years ago did some checking, and obtained the true story from Fred Colebourn.

A.A. Milne likely didn't know that Christopher Robin's favourite bear in the London Zoo was named after the city of Winnipeg. And it's just now that the link between Winnie-the-Pooh and Winnipeg is becoming widely known in Winnipeg itself. A group of citizens has been urging the city to cash in on the connection by erecting a Winnipeg-the-Pooh statue as a tourist attraction. The northern Ontario town of White River also is talking of heralding its link with the Pooh Bear by putting up a statue.

But statues or not, Winnie-the-Pooh and his friend Christopher Robin are already immortal, as the ending of *The House at Pooh Corner* suggests: "So they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest, a little boy and his Bear will always be playing."

And by the same token, when the soldiers of today carry out manoeuvres on their Salisbury Plain exercise grounds, perhaps they at times sense about them ghostly sounds of their departed World War I comrades frolicking with a little bear that came all the way from Canada. ◆

Ted Weatherhead is a journalist with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The illustration of Winnie-the-Pooh on page 35 is from "Winnie-the-Pooh" by A.A. Milne. Used by permission of the Canadian Publishers, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto.

Bloody Fools

There is a feeling growing very strongly everywhere that the British generals one and all are the most incompetent lot of bloody fools that have ever been collected together for the purpose of sacrificing armies in historic times.

— William E. Oliver, letter to Frederick S. Oliver, Victoria, B.C., 1915.

Russian Harvest

In the account book of the Great War, the page recording the Russian losses has been ripped out. The figures are unknown. Five millions, or eight? We ourselves know not. All we do know is that, at times, fighting the Russians, we had to remove the piles of enemy bodies from before our trenches, so as to get a clear field of fire against new waves of assault.

— Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, 1917.

LETTERS HOME

Three farm boys from Ontario fight the war to end all wars

Introduction by John Macfie

Roy, Arthur and John Macfie all served in the 1st Canadian Infantry Battalion. The three brothers were born in a farming settlement known locally as Sunny Slope, near Dunchurch in Parry Sound District, Ontario, the oldest sons of Frank and Mary Macfie. Frank, a native of Islay in Scotland and the son of a clergyman, came to Dunchurch in 1880 at the age of 30 to visit his bachelor uncle James Macfie who had taken up a homestead there. While the two were clearing land a tree fell on the older man, breaking his hip. Frank stayed on to help his uncle through his convalescence (being well up in years, he never fully recovered) and in the meantime met and married Mary Millin, a daughter of the first settler in Dunchurch. They raised four boys and three girls while expanding James's small clearing into a modestly prosperous farm with 75 acres under cultivation.

Biographical sketches of Roy, Arthur and John follow. The remaining children, and their ages when war broke out, were: Jessie, 19; Muriel, 15; Gladys, 12; and Norman, eight.

6836 Corporal Donald Roy Macfie (1891-1976)

As the oldest child, Roy bore a large share of the burden of the annual round of planting, tending and harvesting of crops, and of clearing new land. His schooling, which amounted to about three years in all, took place in a tiny one-room log building nearly two miles from home. His letters, however, reveal a fair command of English, probably a reflection of the influence of a literate father and a dedicated mother. Roy began working in nearby lumber camps and on the river drive in his teens. He joined the local militia unit, the 23rd Regiment (Northern Pioneers) based in Parry Sound.

By the time war broke out in August 1914 the 23rd Regiment had become largely inactive, and Roy had not taken any part in it for over two years. Nevertheless, when a call went out from national defence headquarters urging militia members to sign up for active service, he and one other from Dunchurch, shoemaker Tom Buchanan, promptly enlisted. They caught the thrice-weekly stage and journeyed ten miles to the armouries at McKellar where they exchanged civilian clothes for the red tunics and blue trousers of the militia. In Parry Sound, 15 miles farther down the road, they found a tent camp set up on the fair grounds awaiting the expected influx of recruits. Barely more than 100 of the several hundred men on the nominal roll of the 23rd showed up, but those few were impatient to get going. Later in life Roy was given to recall, with irony, how he feared the war would end before he got there. As it turned out he was not to see home again for almost five years.

On 20 August the recruits were marched to the railway station bound for the rallying point of the 1st Canadian Expeditionary Force in a mushrooming tent encampment on a sandy plain at Valcartier outside Quebec City. Duncan F. Macdonald, a Parry Sound diarist whose son Aubrey was a junior officer among them, noted their departure: "The Northern Pioneers XXIII Rgt. boarded the CPR this morning . . . The boys are off. God goodly speed them, and may they prove themselves to be soldiers, men and Canadians worthy of their names and blood."

At Valcartier the Parry Sound contingent, too small to form its own battalion, became part of the London, Ontario-based 1st Canadian Infantry Battalion, which in turn formed a component of the 1st Brigade of the

1st Canadian Division. As the war wore on this series of firsts was to become a source of intense pride to those who wore on their shoulders their unit's identifying square of scarlet cloth superimposed by a smaller green circle.

Roy, probably because of his farm background, was made a driver in the battalion horse transport. Initial training, largely in musketry and marching, was given at Valcartier then, on 25 September 1914, the Canadian Expeditionary Force embarked at Quebec. It took 31 ships to contain the 31,000 men, their horses and equipment; the 47 officers and 1,106 other ranks of the 1st Battalion were assigned to the *Laurentic*. The flotilla was joined at Gaspé by an escort of British warships, and sailed in three parallel columns for England on 3 October completing the crossing in smooth seas in eleven days.

The contingent camped and trained on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire through an exceedingly wet and miserable autumn and early winter then, following a rough crossing to St. Nazaire and a ride in box cars (40 men or eight horses to a car) into Belgium, Roy found himself at the front just short of six months after enlisting. The 1st Battalion arrived on the Continent on 11 February 1915 and would not leave as a unit until 25 March 1919, by which time close to 7,000 men had served in its ranks. The dead totalled 745, not many fewer than the battalion's effective front line strength, and casualties of all kinds amounted to over 4,000. The battalion which arrived back in Halifax on 21 April 1919 aboard the *Olympic*, sister ship of the *Titanic*, contained a mere handful of the "originals" who had sailed from Gaspé four and one-half years earlier. Among these few was Roy Macfie.

The 1st Battalion was blooded at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915 and was to be involved in most of the Western Front actions in which Canadian forces took part during the remainder of the war. Of these Roy missed only the Amiens and Arras battles of the summer of 1918, during which he was on a training course in England. Following the armistice, the battalion remained in Europe as part of the army of occupation. Roy was lightly wounded by shrapnel at Passchendaele, but otherwise came through the war unscathed. He was twice awarded the Military Medal for persevering under shellfire in his job of leading horse and mule supply convoys to the front line.

Upon returning home Roy acquired the family farm

Recruits of the 162nd Battalion march out of Burkes Falls, spring 1916.

Canadian War Museum

Landing of the First Canadian Division at St. Nazaire, 1915, by E. Bundy.

under the veterans' settlement scheme, and in 1920 married Edith Mitchell of Haileybury, Ontario and raised seven children. In 1942 he enlisted in the Veterans Guard, a unit of Great War veterans recruited to serve as prisoner-of-war camp security staff. Two years of that relatively inactive life broken by stints of strenuous farm labour while home on leave caused complications with a piece of shrapnel which had lodged in muscle 27 years earlier at Passchendaele. Following an operation to remove the bean-sized chunk of metal he was discharged from the army, invalided out by the wound which had failed to get him even a coveted convalescence in England (a "Blighty") in World War I.

Roy resumed farming until about 1951 when his eldest son Donald took over operation of the farm. But Roy continued to work, prospecting in northern Saskatchewan during that region's uranium rush of the 1950s, then at logging and helping around the farm almost until the day he died at age 85 years.

657650 Private Arthur Gill Macfie (1893 - 1919)

Arthur was an enterprising youth. At the age of 17 he joined his uncle John Millin in a venture with a tea shop near present-day Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto, then the following year returned to the farm to embark on a career as a lumberman. He acquired 200 acres of forest nearby, signed a contract to supply timber to a nearby sawmill and hired a labour force of five men including his brothers Roy and John. By the time he joined the army he was also speculating in real estate.

At the end of 1915, when it was clear the war was going to be a very long one, Prime Minister Robert Borden announced that the nation's armed forces were to be doubled in size to half a million men. To encourage enlistments a new approach to recruiting was taken. Formerly, recruiting offices operated only in larger centres, now battalions were to be raised from designated counties and districts to give them a local identity. Parry Sound District was alloted the 162nd Battalion to fill. Recruiting offices were set up in Parry Sound and about a dozen smaller centres throughout the district, and the task of assembling a body of approximately 1,000 men got under way early in 1916 and continued through the first six months of that year.

Arthur was taken on strength in Parry Sound on 10 March and for a while was billeted in the hotel at the village of McKellar, ten miles from home. Late in May the entire battalion assembled in a tent camp designated Camp Edgar, on a tract of farm land a mile east of Sundridge. Basic training was given there, then the unit joined several others of its kind at Niagara-on-the-Lake for more advanced instruction. On 31 October the 30 officers and 766 other ranks of the 162nd embarked from Halifax for England on the *Caronia*.

Following a winter in training camps in the south of England Arthur joined Roy in the 1st Battalion,

Muriel, Gladys and Jessie Macfie on the farm, circa 1916.

arriving in the Arras sector in time to be wounded in action leading up to the historic assault on Vimy Ridge in early April 1917. He was hospitalized in England for several months, then invalided back to Canada with a partially disabled arm. Upon being discharged in March 1918 he returned home and resumed logging and helping on the farm. On 19 May 1919, while using explosives to remove tree stumps in a fallow-clearing operation, he was killed when a box of dynamite detonators he was holding accidentally exploded.

658027 Private John McKenzie Macfie (1897-1917)

John followed Arthur into the 162nd Battalion on 31 May 1916, shortly after his 19th birthday. A tall, raw-boned redhead, he had begun working in the lumber woods by the time he was 15. A trip to Saskatchewan to work in the harvest fields in the autumn of 1915 may have been his only extended journey from home prior to enlistment. John travelled the same path as Arthur to the 1st Battalion in France, except that, having been selected for training as a sniper while in England, he arrived in France about a month later. It was the policy of the Canadian armed forces to allow, and perhaps encourage brothers to serve in the same unit, so it was probably not entirely by coincidence that all three Macfie boys turned up in the same small body of fewer than 1,000 men in the spring of 1917. As it turned out John was to see his oldest brother Roy only once as a result of what he considered a fortunate posting. Following the historic capture of the commanding elevation known as Vimy Ridge the British and Canadian armies continued to make lesser incursions into the plain lying beyond. On 3 May it fell to the 1st Battalion to advance half a mile across crop fields to capture a few acres of forest adjoining the village of Fresnoy. The objective was achieved, but as his company dug in in broad daylight under point-blank cannon fire, John died in his first hours of front line duty.

The letters have been edited for publication in *The Beaver.*

ROY TO MARY

Valcartier, P.Q.
23 August 1914

I suppose you will be wondering where I have gone to. Well I had no chance to write before, I couldn't get paper or anything. Not much of a chance yet, just sitting on the ground and men singing, yelling, working, playing all kinds of music and making enough noise to waken the dead. This is a sight worth going across the world to see. There is a gang in a tent right

Canadian War Museum

The Taking of Vimy Ridge, Easter Monday 1917, by Richard Jack.

near us singing a hymn now that would down any church choir you ever heard, every kind of voice there is. . . . It doesn't matter where you go they are singing and yelling. Everybody seems to be wild. The grounds are seven miles by four and covered with tents and perfectly level, surrounded by great high hills. And when you get up and look down on the tents it is the prettiest sight I ever saw.

It is not just so nice as it looks though when you have to live in it. It is the real soldier life all right. The first night we were here there was fourteen men slept in each of those little round tents. It is all right now though, just seven in ours. There are fifteen thousand men here now . . . and hundreds of men and teams drawing in loads of tents and supplies from daylight to dark. . . . I guess there is a dozen or more train loads of men arrive every day, and trains as long as ever they can draw.

It was a great trip coming. I had my head out of the window all the time it was daylight. Every town we passed there were crowds at the station waving flags and yelling goodbye and every farm house the women would be out waving their aprons, dish cloths and anything they could get hold of.

Well I am not sorry yet for coming although I may be before I am through. But don't you worry about me for I wouldn't be contented if I had stayed at home, for I would be in misery when I would hear about what they were doing here and I would want to be with them. But it is no picnic I'll tell you, we are just chased and ordered around like a lot of cattle. . . .

ROY TO FRANK Valcartier, P.Q.
(Undated)

Well we are having a very easy time of it so far, just laying around most of the time. I don't know what they are going to do with us yet. . . . One will say we are going right to the front, another will say we will soon be sent home. . . . This camp must be an awful expense to the country. Just to stand on one of the main roads for awhile you would wonder where all the stuff could be got in such a hurry, strings of wagons and autos as far as you can see piled high with bread and meat, uniforms, boots and everything imagined.

It seems a very funny thing, this is supposed to be a Canadian contingent and I think that two-thirds of the men that are here are Old Country men, if not more! There are an awful lot who have been through the Boer War, a lot of them have medals. There must be something nice about it when they want to try it again.

ROY TO MARY Valcartier, P.Q.
(undated)

I think we will soon be going away somewhere. . . . I hear some saying that we can't write any more after Tuesday. But you can always write, for it will be forwarded to wherever we go. Some of the regiments here get well treated by their people. They got a lot of

Roy Macfie.

money collected for them, and they get carloads of fruit and extra chuck sent to them. I hear they gathered 26 hundred dollars in Parry Sound for the boys. I don't know whether we are counted in with them or not. I don't know what is best to do with my wages, whether to draw it and risk sending it home or just not draw it at all. They give us five dollars a week to spend. I don't think I will take mine any more, it is too hard to hang on to. We get $1.10 a day and all our clothes. We don't have to spend any at all unless we like. I guess I should send it home; you will need it worse than I do if you haven't sold the cattle yet.

There is going to be another review again today. The Duke [of Connaught, Governor-General] is here again and some more wonderful men. I wish to goodness they would stay away. I'm getting sick of reviews. . . .

ROY TO JESSIE Valcartier, P.Q.
22 September 1914

I can't get the words spelt right tonight. I am all excited. We expect to leave here for England at anytime . . . and everybody is wild with excitement. . . . Some are singing and another bunch are having a dance out in the dark and I think they must all be trying to call off at once by the noise.

I had just got nicely acquainted with the bunch in our tent when two of them transferred to the cavalry, and then another fellow and I went into the transport, to drive team.

What I don't like about it [is] there are so many Englishmen in the outfit and they are always running the Canadians and everything that is Canadian down; they think nobody knows anything but them. The Scotch are not so bad, but I hate the sight of an Englishman, the kind that are here, anyway.

I have a dandy little team. . . . I had them hitched up last night for the first time. This is an awful place; you just get settled down to write when they come running around calling "Fall in" and away you have to go. I just came in now from taking the oath of allegiance again. I have signed enough papers to fill a wagon box since I started this job.

ROY TO FRANK I don't know where,
26 September 1914

. . . We took the train . . . yesterday morning to Quebec and got on the boat . . . and stayed at the dock that night, but there was so many got off in spite of guards and got drunk, that they pulled out into the river a piece and anchored there. Now we are on our way to Father Point, and we stay there I think for three or four days till the rest of the ships get loaded. There will be quite a young fleet when they all get together. There was six or eight ships at Quebec, and there are to be some battleships meet us at Father Point for escorts. There are eighteen hundred men on this one, the *Laurentic*.

ROY TO JESSIE Salisbury Plain, England
22 October 1914

It seems funny to hear them saying, "back in Canada". Anywhere in Canada seems like home now we're so far away from it. We had a great reception at Devonport. There is a long bay about a mile long, Plymouth Sound I think they call it, and the ships are towed in by tugs. All along the banks were crowded with people cheering for all they were worth. And while we were lying in the harbour crowds of them came out every day in the tugs and went around amongst the ships. The troops had to march right up through the city, and the police could hardly keep the streets open. The people here are just crazy over the Canadians.

ROY TO ARTHUR Salisbury Plain, England
27 October 1914

The people here seem to think the Canadian soldiers are something wonderful. I hope they keep their name up when they get to the front. It has been wet . . . and cold . . . it doesn't matter how wet or cold we get, we never get near a fire. It is kind of hard when you're out all day in the rain and no warm fire or supper to

look forward to, just a dark cold tent. A fellow soon has to learn to be a thief here, or he would soon run short of everything. They steal horses, harness, clothes or anything they can get a hold of, and then you have to do the same to keep up. I have had to do a little sleight-of-hand work to get enough to eat. That's why I like the transport job, we draw all the provisions and we manage to slip a little away and then divide up when we get in.

This camp is a long way behind Valcartier in every way. The Englishmen were always blowing about England, everything would be a lot better when we got there, but I think they were badly fooled. Canada for mine, anyway.

ROY TO MARY Salisbury Plain, England
10 December 1914

We have a little oil stove in our tent, and it makes a big difference in the evenings. The only thing I would like to have from home is a pair of mitts. They don't keep them in this country and they would come in fine for driving with in the mornings. . . .

ROY TO NORMAN Salisbury Plain, England
15 January 1915

I am always glad to hear from you because you always have lots of news. Next time Pa tells you to go to bed when you are writing me, tell him you are busy. You are having a lot more fighting at school then we are in the Canadian Army. I haven't had a fight yet.

There are two little boys here as mascots, one in the Nova Scotians. One . . . stowed away from Smith's Falls to Quebec, and then hid away on one of the ships and they didn't find him for a long time. He was a plucky little lad, wasn't he? They [have] them both dressed in full uniform, and them only about three feet high.

ROY TO MURIEL Salisbury Plain, England
15 January 1915

I don't think we will ever see the front, and the longer we stay here the more I want to go. It seems too bad to get all rigged out for nothing. We have a lot of stuff to look after now. We are responsible for a team, harness, wagon, rifle and all our clothes and a whole lot of other little things. We have been going on long route marches with the Battalion this week and we have to take everything with us. . . . But Gee! it is great riding along in a wagon looking down at the other poor beggars walking all day. It is just a nice sight-seeing trip for us. I hope nothing happens that I will ever have to go back into the infantry again. We live pretty good on our job. We manage to swipe a lot of good things when we are drawing supplies for the officers' mess. My chum came in last night from Salisbury with all his pockets full of little bottles of turkey and tongue and catsup, condensed milk and onions, and he had a rabbit, too, but lost it.

Arthur Macfie.

ROY TO MURIEL Avonmouth, England
8 February 1915

I have been terribly busy . . . on the road every day and half the night and yesterday capped the whole thing when we got orders to move at four o'clock. It rained all day, and we paddled around in the mud and water getting ready and then when we got started it just fairly poured down with an awful wind and kept it up all night. They have changed our harness and we have to ride horseback and carry all our belongings on the saddle. Well, we rode to Amesbury and were soaking wet when we got there and then we loaded our horses and wagons on the train, and got on ourselves and shivered in our wet clothes till we got to Avonmouth, then got our horses off and loaded them on this ship, where I am now writing this letter with the paper on a bag of oats and lying with my feet under the horses. It is a troop ship and there is no bunks or beds at all, we just have to sleep wherever we can get room to lay down. . . . I just found out now where we are and I have been on the ship 12 hours, and I have no idea where this ship is bound for when it does start, or when it is going to start.

John Macfie.

ROY TO MARY Estaires, France
30 March 1915

. . . We have moved back from the firing line for a couple of weeks again. We are billeted in farms out in the country. We sleep in the upstairs of a big farmhouse, and it is a dandy place, but I wish we were on the move again. . . . I hope they don't keep us in this forsaken country any length of time after the war is over, if we live to see that time. I have been over quite a bit of it now and it is all the very same. The towns and farm buildings look as if they were built before the flood. Of course the Germans have been all through it and ransacked everything, and all the people that had any money are gone. And the country is full of soldiers. In the morning every road is lined with horses exercising. . . . We get some of the Canadian papers sometimes, and we see a lot more about the Canucks than we do here.

ROY TO GLADYS Vlamertinge, Belgium
7 May 1915

We are resting again in a nice big town 'way back from the firing-line . . . I only wish I could talk French; quite a lot of the fellows can and they are right in it now because the people make quite a fuss over the Canadians here now after them doing so well. Things are not nearly so bad as it looked at first. There are not so many killed as they thought. There was a lot mixed up with other regiments and lost, and are gathering in, and a lot are just slightly wounded.

Two of our little bunch are gone. There was six of us that have stuck together through everything ever since we landed in England almost. It didn't matter how we moved about or what kind of place we got into we always managed to get together. But now there are only four of us. One was killed and the other badly wounded, and one of the others scratched a little all by the one shell, and it was a miracle they weren't all killed. I happened to be asleep under my wagon or I might have been. We were digging a dugout to sleep in and we had stopped for dinner and I laid down for a sleep and another two thought it too hot to work. But the other three went at it. [The shell] landed right in between holes. We buried him in a Belgian's garden under a tree. They were both from near Mount Forest, just young fellows. It is wonderful how much wounds a man can walk with. This other fellow was shot through the throat, and in the breast, leg, hands and arm, and he walked quite apiece. I saw one fellow of our company walk in two miles with a bullet hole through his mouth. It went in the front of his face some place and through his tongue and out under his chin.

ROY TO MARY Bethune, France
2 June 1915

We are out for what they call another rest, but to us transport guys it is harder than when we are in action because we are forever cleaning something up (and you know how I like that kind of stuff) and when there is a bit of fighting going on they forget about that. We had no mishaps or close shaves at all this time in our little bunch, everything went off very quiet. Another of my old chums in the company was killed though, a fellow named Hadley from Utterson, and it is simply a shame that he should be killed too, for he was the toughest bit of stuff I ever seen. He was only a slim bit of a chap and had both his ankles broken at one time and was kind of crippled, but he would never give in, it didn't matter how long the march, he would get there somehow. He was often a bit behind but he got there just the same, and shot and shell didn't bother him. I used to laugh at him telling stories after a battle, but I guess he will tell no more now.

ROY TO ARTHUR OR JOHN Bethune, France
24 June 1915

Did Mother get my last letter? I wrote to her telling about our last battle and I don't know if it would go through or not; I am afraid I told too much about it. We lost over twenty officers in our one battalion. There is only six left and they weren't in the charge, except one. There was only one poor little lieutenant came through alive. So there is very few of the old battalion that left Canada left now. It is pitiful to see them out on a route march now, just a little bunch with hardly

any officers to lead them, but they sing and whistle and play their mouth organs as they march just the same.

ROY TO GLADYS Ploegsteert, Belgium
18 October 1915

I got the pair of sox . . . and they couldn't have come at a better time . . . because my other ones were wet and hard enough to skate with. . . . I have taken a lot of comfort out of them already. The nights are getting cold for riding out again, and we will soon have to lug a load of clothes around with us again. I am sending you a souvenir ring . . . made out of the nose of a German shell. The old chap that drives our medical cart made it for me. It comes from Plugstreet, if you ever heard of that place. If you haven't you will read of it sometime.

ROY TO MURIEL Ploegsteert, Belgium
25 December 1915

. . . Well this is Xmas. . . . You made me homesick telling me about the sleighing. We have some long old chats around our fire every night when we get gathered in. About what the people will be doing at home. . . . Instead of the sleigh bells we hear nothing but the splash of mud. I can't imagine it is Christmas. . . .

ROY TO FRANK Ploegsteert, Belgium
3 January 1916

. . . No, it does not look much like "Peace" yet. The Germans certainly have surprised the world. They have learn't Britain a few costly lessons . . . but I think they have done about their worst now. I expect they will be making another try along here some of these times, but I don't think they will ever make anything of it. We have the best of them now in artillery. I wish they would try something and get moving one way or the other . . . but the boys in the trenches don't think that.

They had a sort of a truce for a little while on Christmas day. One of our highlanders went over half way with a little flag and a German came and met him . . . they stuck up flags along the trenches as far as the truce went, and then they got up on the parapets and looked around, but it didn't last long. Somebody had to take a crack at one of them and spoiled it.

ROY TO MURIEL "Flanders-in-the-mud"
25 January 1916

I am getting homesick. I haven't had a letter from home for a long time. I hope they haven't sunk another mail ship. We are still resting and the weather is still fine, and we are having a very good time. The Germans have started to give us a few air raids around here now. Air fights are a daily occurrence. I intended writing you a letter tonight, but I am going to wait till I get one from you. I don't feel like writing.

"We'll Never Let The Old Flag Fall": Norman (left) and friends keep up morale at home.

ARTHUR TO GLADYS Sundridge, Ont.
6 August 1916

I suppose you have heard that we are going to Niagara? Our officers tell us that we are very lucky in this respect. The advance party leaves tomorrow morning, and we are supposed to leave Wednesday. We haven't heard anything about harvest leave yet. I hope we get it, though.

The ladies of the town gave us a supper, or rather filled us up on cakes and pies (this was yesterday). I never saw so many pies in my life. We eat about a whole one each, and after it was all over some carried enough away to keep us going for today. We all look like a bunch of farmers now; everybody has a straw hat now, the right side turned up with a Maple Leaf badge on it. . . .

JOHN TO MURIEL Niagara Camp, Ont.
5 September 1916

We got down here alright and had a pretty good trip. We got into Toronto about 8 o'clock on Friday morning so we had all day to look around. Uncle John [Millin] took us to the Exhibition and we had quite a time. Yesterday was a holiday and they give us all a pass so a bunch of us went up to see the Falls. There is a trolley car runs all the way down. We stopped a while at St. Catharines. I tell you there are some great fruit farms around there; I wish you could get it up there as cheap as we can.

ROY TO MURIEL France
27 September 1916

How long is it since you had a letter from your wayward old brother, anyway? I am afraid it's quite a while, isn't it? But you have lots of other brothers to write to now. They'll have lots to write about for a while.

We've had a few fine days . . . it's a good job too because we are trailing here and there all over and never have a billet. One night in a place and the next, miles away . . . sleeping under apple and pear trees. All you've got to do is shake the tree a little.

JOHN TO JESSIE Niagara Camp
28 September 1916

They are giving it to us pretty hard now, the Colonel [Lieutenant-Colonel Arthurs] says we are going overseas pretty soon and we have got to work a little extra. He says we may have to work on Sundays too. We went into the trenches last night about 9 o'clock and came out about 11 o'clock today, and we are going on a route march sometime early in the morning. . . .

ARTHUR TO MARY Shorncliffe, England
15 November 1916

We landed on the morning of the 11th . . . and had the good luck to be the first on the train, which we all laughed and jeered at when we saw the tiny little outfit. The coaches were like street cars . . . the freight cars something like a wagon . . . and the wee engine. . . . One fellow called an engineer over and asked him what an outfit would be worth, as he would like to send a couple home for his kids to play with. . . .

ROY TO MURIEL France
22 November 1916

I'm afraid you are neglected lately, by me anyway. . . . But you must get lots of letters though when there are so many of us away, five of us now all writing to you, the only sister at home to keep the home fires burning. . . . You are certainly doing your bit. I am sure you must be lonesome at times but everyone has a little extra to do now, and the only thing to do is just "carry on" and look cheery. It won't last forever. . .

ARTHUR TO FRANK AND MARY Sandling Camp, England
17 December 1916

I'd give quite a bit to be home for Christmas . . . anywhere out of this curse of a place; still we should not complain. This is our first, but Roy's third Xmas away. We have not seen him yet. . . . We are told to forget that little joke about training [in Canada], though I rather like the physical training and bayonet fighting which is all for our own good. The better one can handle the bayonet the more courage in a charge. . . .

JOHN TO MURIEL Sandling Camp, England
22 December 1916

. . . We saw Roy yesterday. He came over from France in the morning to Folkestone and came up here to see us. He is looking fine, I don't think he has changed a bit, only he looks stouter. He was surprised to see so many lads he knew from around Parry Sound in our battalion. . . . He has got a good job over there now, only he seems to be getting sick of it. . . .

JOHN TO JESSIE Sandling Camp, England
28 January 1917

I am over at East Sandling now taking a course for a scout sniper. The scouts and snipers are combined in one now, a man is supposed to be a scout and a marksman too. . . . We don't have to do any fatigues or sentry duties so we put in a pretty easy time of it. . . . It isn't very far over to West Sandling from here and I go over there pretty nearly every night.

ARTHUR TO MARY Sandling Camp, England
2 February 1917

I never was more contented in my life . . . we get our dollar ten whether we work or not; I'm getting that fat I don't think I could work if I had to. We may have it a little tougher when we get to the front and get shot up a little, but we don't expect everything to go nice in wartime. . . . We have a dandy commander now, he is doing everything possible for the men to put them in good heart for France. We have [a] little Scotch [Sergeant-] Major . . . and he couldn't speak a cross word if he had to. Still, there is always some thankless beggars that don't appreciate it when they are used right and get into trouble, which is sure to make it worse for the rest of us. The Major told us today that we weren't children any more and should try to do right. . . .

ROY TO MURIEL Ablain-St. Nazaire, France
3 February 1917

It must keep you going to keep so many of us posted with home news, and do all your work besides, but as long as you write me a few lines I will be satisfied. Gladys will keep me going in gossip; she has more time. The letter I had from her today would make a first-class love letter. If I had a sweetheart to write me a letter like it I'd be jake.

ARTHUR TO FRANK Sandling Camp, England
14 February 1917

We are all feeling happy tonight as we were just warned for draft, and I understand it is for the 1st Battalion too . . . and the best of it is that . . . we are all to go together to Roy's battalion. . . .

I think by the way things are shaping there will be something extra put on shortly after we get out there. I hope we get in the trenches. . . .

JOHN TO JESSIE Sandling Camp, England
28 February 1917

Arthur has gone to France along with the Payette boys and some of the lads from McKellar and quite a bunch out of our old platoon. . . . They will be right along with Roy. I did hate to see them all going away when I couldn't go with them. . . . It looks as though we were never going to leave here, but I should worry, I guess, we're having such an easy time of it here. The only thing is that people will be thinking I have got cold feet and [am] looking for a soft job. But I don't think it will be such a soft job in France. . . .

ARTHUR TO JESSIE France
28 February 1917

. . . We arrived here somewhere in France yesterday and will proceed to somewhere else in France tonight. . . . We have just been rigged out in full war order. . . . I [have] been trying to figure out some way to get it all fastened on, but such things have been done before and we're the boys that can do it again.

ARTHUR TO MARY Estree-Gauchy, France
11 March 1917

We arrived at our destination last night, just exactly one year from the night I enlisted. Of course we are still some distance from the trenches. I met Roy just as soon as we marched into the little village. I was only [with Roy] a few minutes last night, so I will go down and size them up when I'm through with this.

JOHN TO MARY Bramshott Camp, England
9 April 1917

This is Easter Monday but it doesn't make any difference to us here, we don't get any holidays. . . . But I shouldn't be kicking for I just came off pass last night. . . . They sent about fifty of us at a time, but there was a draft called when I was away and so I am out of luck again. I hope somebody takes sick or dies, then maybe they will take me. It is funny that I should be left till the last of our bunch.

ARTHUR TO MARY AND FRANK A hospital in France
10 April 1917

Well I suppose you will have received word or seen in the paper that I got a touch up the line, and will be anxiously waiting to hear from me. Well I'm alright now, and need cause you no worry for several weeks to come. I would have written sooner only we were moving so much (that is, working down the line to the base) and doctoring between times. I got hit from one of those bloomin' whiz-bangs in the left arm. [Arthur was wounded in the early hours of 5 April while on listening post between the lines during a trench raid by other members of his battalion.] My whole arm

Gladys Macfie (left) and neighbour Velma Whitmell collecting for the Red Cross at Parry Sound.

was paralyzed with the shock; everything was going around then. I thought I was shell-shocked sure, so I wasn't long getting down into the bowels of the earth, and was soon dressed. One wound a little below the elbow, the other about on the underside, as I must have raised my arm to my head when I leaned against the trench. I don't know how I got off so lucky. They operated on it but couldn't find anything, so I was X-rayed yesterday, and they got one little piece just about through the arm.

I am trying to write this lying in bed so I think I'll quit as you will have quite a job to make it out. It would be nice if they would make a mistake and send me home. I don't think I'll be any good to the army anyway.

JOHN TO JESSIE Bramshott Camp, England
11 April 1917

I got orders tonight to be ready to go to France any time now as a sniper for the 1st Battalion. There is another fellow that was at the school with me; he is going with me. We don't go with the draft, we will be sent by ourselves. . . .

ARTHUR TO JESSIE Egginton Hall, England
17 April 1917

Hi diddley iky, I've gone back to Blighty, etc. But I suppose you have heard by now that the Germans did not care to have me up around the front line for some reason or other. Anyway, they started me back in a hurry . . . I have been most fortunate in getting it in the left arm instead of the right, as I will have it to amuse myself with for the next few weeks as I will try and do a little writing. . . .

When I look back over my trip to France it just

seems as though I went up and paid Roy a visit and had a look at a few things around there and listened to stories and adventures of others, then came back.

It was great marching up at night for the first time. You'd look out through the dark across a . . . field to be momentarily blinded with the flash of a battery opening up. Then you scrunch up, waiting for the screeching shock of discharge. Then you hear the shells going swish, swish, swish through the air too far beyond ever to hear them explode. Then another coughs up right alongside the road, and so on all night along the line. We did working party for a couple of nights, then went in the front line on [April] Fool's Day. I remember it was a nice starlight night. Another fellow and I were on listening post, and [it] seemed as though we were the only two on the Western Front. . . . The guns, which looked as though they formed a circle right around us as they flashed in the distance, seemed to be centred on us. But they would go miles beyond, and generally Fritz's way. Then one's eyes would follow its trail across a seeming desert, and you'd wonder if there was any life for miles. Then click! and a flare light is fired up close by, so near that one is brought to realize that the Hun is not many yards away, and you see your mate as though a gas light was turned on. You remain perfectly motionless till it dies out, as even pulling your head down may disclose the position to a sniper.

Then probably the light artillery will open up on a short range and tear up Fritz's trenches a bit, and one cannot help but grin when you see the work of destruction going on on his side of no-man's-land. And if it continues a few minutes he will start sending up . . . flares and rockets of all colours, and a person would think he was in the grandstand watching some stunt at the Exhibition. But just wait a few minutes and you'll wish you were in a movie with your best girl watching the blame thing on a screen, for Fritz has got his wind up and the lights have been a signal for a slight retaliation, and as the shells burst around you hug the side of the trench while bits of chalk and dirt rattle against your steel helmet. Then all is quiet again and you just grin. Then towards morning one gets a little dozy and the click, click, click of the firing of the overhead machine gun seems farther and farther away up among the stars. Then the war seems to be up there, and as one looks up the eye catches a shell as it passes among them, just like a red coal or a shooting star. Yes, it's the stars shooting at each other and the moon is holding the light and laughing at them. Click!! and one becomes more rigid as another flare has brought you back to the realities of war, and [you] stare toward the Hun.

JOHN TO MARY France
26 April 1917

I have arrived here all safe. . . . It is a pretty good place and the weather has been fine since we struck France. The ground has all dried up. . . . I don't think we will be going up the line for a while yet. It took us about twenty-four hours on the train coming from the base and then we had to walk twenty-two kilometres to here, and our pack and outfit weighed about ninety pounds . . . I was pretty well all-in when I got here. We are about four miles behind the line and you can see the shells bursting from the hill here.

Roy Macfie (right) and comrades. Johnny MacFarlane, left, was killed when he went up the line in Roy's place.

I haven't seen Roy yet but I saw a fellow last night that knew him well and he told me he would take me up to see him this afternoon, but I was busy till it was too late. Maybe I will see him tomorrow.

JOHN TO GLADYS France
29 April 1917

We have got up to our battalion all right, have been here four or five days. I was up to the trenches for one day. Our battalion is out having a rest for a while, came out last night. I saw Roy and will be able to see him quite often. He seems to be toughing it good. He looks just as fat as ever.

ARTHUR TO FRANK AND MARY Egginton Hall, England
21 May 1917

The news that I have to bear now will be very disheartening for you, though you will have heard it long before this as they will probably wire you, that John

is missing . . . I just got a letter from Roy, and he may have written you by now, though he didn't want to till he found out more about him if possible. This will be a terrible shock for you folk, as you will hardly have heard that he was in France before you would get the word. . . . One cannot realize what the war is like until they are face to face with it, then we are more prepared for such a thing, and entertain little hope for much better sometimes. If only he was here or home, and me in his place, I would feel much easier as I fancy I would turn up somewhere. But missing does not mean done; though I cannot say much in favor of that insinuating word. Anyway, let us hope for the best this time. But the war is not near over, and you must be prepared for the worst. I hate to think of being here in comfort and the others out there, but I guess I'll be back soon enough. Anyway, it wouldn't make it any better for them.

It must have been John's first trip in, too, but the fight was on then so it would be worse than when I was there. But if he has gone now it was because he didn't hang back any. And I know that you would sooner hear the "killed in action" than to ever hear that a Macfie hung back.

ARTHUR TO MARY Epsom, England
4 August 1917

Well this is the third anniversary of [the outbreak of] Britain's war with Germany, and according to public opinion here peace is further away now than it seemed when war was declared . . . as I have found out more particulars about John, I will first tell you all that I know about him.

Have you been still entertaining hope up his turning up? At least that was the impression that I got from Jessie's letter, but I am afraid that my letter will destroy all further hope. . . . I don't know how it was that they did not know it at the battalion, instead of reporting him missing. Did Roy tell you about finding his identification disc? He said that he didn't know whether he could find his grave or not. Anyway, it was at the storming of Fresnoy that he fell — a hero's death, his face still towards the cursed Huns, and never a thought of fear.

I met Frank Teneycke here yesterday, and he told me all that he knew about him. . . . He was standing by his side when a shell landed in among them, though he doesn't seem to know what really did happen to John, but thinks that he was killed outright. There was six of them in the trench, all of them hit. . . .

ARTHUR TO FRANK Basingstoke, England
27 November 1917

I suppose you have received a wire about Roy being wounded . . . He got it over two weeks ago in this last terrible scrap that the Canadians were in [Passchendaele]. He said it was the worst one they were ever in. But I'm afraid that he is not going to be able to make Blighty. He got it in the arm. . . . I suppose he has told you the particulars. They should send him over for convalescence anyway, as it is near time for his annual leave, but it seems that the longer [in] the services the harder to get away from it. In fact he should make Canada for awhile. The Macfies got a bad cutting up this summer, all in about six months. . . .

ROY TO MURIEL France
16 December 1917

Well it was just like getting home again coming back here. I have been here so long that I am lonesome anywhere else. I am part of the works, and all the fellows are like brothers. One thing I can say, all the time I've been here I've never had an enemy. I could have got a job down at the base while I was there but nothing doing, up here or my discharge for me.

ROY TO MURIEL Buxton, England
2 February 1918

. . . I am afraid I haven't anything startling to tell you, only that I am still in hospital . . . I will soon be here three weeks . . . still I haven't got my voice altogether back yet. I am beginning to think it must have been through the effects of gas. I don't care how soon they kick me out of here now. I will go to the base from here, so the winter will be well away by the time I get to France . . . I believe they have started giving the First Contingent men leave to Canada. Started with the married men, I think. I wish I was a married man, eh? . . .

I hope before this gets to you Arthur will have paid you a visit. He left here two days ago, along with a lot of other fellows I knew. Maybe I wouldn't like to have been with them! Gee, when I thought of them being on their way "Home". And me with a good chance of going the other way very soon. Well, I didn't feel much like singing, to say the least. . . .

ROY TO MURIEL Buxton, England
15 February 1918

. . . I have been expecting for over two weeks that every day as it came would be my last here, and still I am sticking around. My name isn't on the orders tonight either, so that's another day. . . . I am all right now. The last time I was up before the Big Man, he told me I had better put in an application for the rest of my leave and by the time that was up I would be fit. That was two weeks ago and it hasn't come through yet. My long service must surely have made an impression, and they are taking pity on me. Well, I am not going to ask to get away anyway; this is a lot better than France, allow me to inform you. Nothing whatever to do but go for a walk in the afternoon, or take in a show. . . .

ROY TO MURIEL Bexhill, England
22 April 1918

It's some few days since I got your last letter . . . but don't think because I didn't answer yours first I haven't got that warm spot in my heart you asked me about, because I have a big spot reserved for you . . . I have a warm spot for a lot of people — I guess it's because none of it is in the army, that I have so much of it for people who are in no way connected with it. The army has almost broken it altogether. I am afraid this place will do [it] if I am here long. I would far sooner face shells and bullets any day than all this regimental stuff they hand out here. They have my goat right!

You see I am marked D.I. and that calls for six weeks physical training here to harden you up after the easy hospital life. I may get to like it better, but so far I have been wishing I was in France. There are no hardships or danger here, but that's the part I used to like out there. . . . But it seems I have to stay here till I am sent. The whole army moves together, and they won't do anything out of the ordinary for any individual, not even let him go to the front if he wants to.

I have been here five days . . . I believe they will make a soldier out of me after all . . . if I get six weeks like today on the parade ground. There are a lot of my old pals here though, and it's not lonesome. And another consolation is you don't need to worry about Fritz getting [me] now for a while.

My dear, I'll have to close. It's nearly lights-out, and everything must be done on the tick here. So be a good girl, and don't forget your old soldier brother. . . .

Although Roy was to spend another eleven months in Europe, his foregoing letter dated at Bexhill on 22 April 1918 is the last in the collection. While it is unlikely he stopped writing home altogether, it is obvious the time between letters continued to lengthen.

ARTHUR TO MURIEL Toronto
16 March 1918

Just scratch you a line to let you know that I am going to try and get there sometime Saturday evening . . . I got kicked out of the army yesterday, but have not finished my dental work yet. I have to get false teeth now — broke all mine eating hardtack and barb wire. I got ragged out in civvies the other night but felt kind of out of place in them. . . . ♦

John Macfie, an occasional contributor to "The Beaver", lives at Parry Sound and is the son of Roy Macfie and nephew to John and Arthur. John Macfie was in the RCAF in World War II. He plans to publish a larger selection of his family war letters this autumn. The Macfie letters and the family photographs are deposited in the National Archives, Ottawa.

Meditations on War

But although men like to fight, war is not inevitable. War is not of God's making. War is a crime committed by men and, therefore, when enough people say it shall not be, it cannot be. This will not happen until women are allowed to say what they think of war. Up to the present time women have had nothing to say about war, except pay the price of war — this privilege has been theirs always.

History, romance, legend and tradition have been written by men, have shown the masculine aspect of war and have surrounded it with a false glory and have sought to throw the veil of glamour over its hideous face. Our histories have followed the wars. Invasions, conquests, battles, sieges make up the subject-matter of our histories. . . In the new histories we will be shown the tragedy, the heartbreaking tragedy of war, which like some dreadful curse has followed the human family, beaten down their plans, their hopes, wasted their savings, destroyed their homes, and in every way turned back the clock of progress.

— **Nellie McClung, *In Times Like These, 1915***

See that little stream — we could walk to it in two minutes. It took the British a month to walk to it — a whole empire walking very slowly, dying in front and pushing forward behind. And another empire walked very slowly backward a few inches a day, leaving the dead like a million bloody rags. No European will ever do that again in this generation.

— **F. Scott Fitzgerald**

The study of war has taught me that almost every war was avoidable and that the outbreak was most often produced by statesmen losing their heads or their patience, and putting their opponent in a position where he could not draw back without serious loss of face.

— **Captain Basil Liddell Hart**

They died in Hell, they called it Passchendaele.

— **Siegfried Sassoon**

'Enemy Aliens'

German-Canadians on the Home Front

By Brenda Lee-Whiting

Introduction

Shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914 the federal government at Ottawa drew up and passed into law a "War Measures Act" which gave the authorities extraordinary powers with which to meet the emergency.

The power of the government to take arbitrary measures was increased, civil rights were restricted and the authorities were given the freedom to bypass the right of *habeas corpus*. It was now possible for those in power to arrest and detain without due process of law.

Among the first to feel the full weight of the War Measures Act were the so-called "enemy aliens". At the outbreak of war there were nearly half a million former residents of Austria-Hungary and Germany who had recently settled in Canada, but who were not yet British subjects. Fears were expressed that these "enemy aliens" would pose a threat to national security and by the end of 1914 almost six thousand foreign men of military age had been gathered in and interned in camps across the nation. Many of those interned were unemployed men who had been rounded up in communities who feared that they might become a burden on the local welfare system. Other foreign nationals were detained when it was feared that they would take jobs away from "native-born Canadians" and other "British subjects".

As the war continued, saner heads prevailed and many of the internees were released to participate in the war effort on the Canadian side. By the end of 1916 fewer than 3,000 internees remained in camps at Amherst, Nova Scotia; Morrissey, British Columbia; and Kapuskasing, Ontario.

Fear of "enemy alien" activity persisted, however, combined with a general distaste for things German. Berlin, Ontario, was forced to change its name to Kitchener, after the British military hero. Performances of music by German composers such as Beethoven and Wagner were stopped. When the Parliament Buildings at Ottawa burned in 1916 there were whispers that "enemy aliens" had set the blaze, a charge that few believed.

As the war dragged on and the news of slaughter and atrocity came in from the front, anger against all things German increased. Merchants with German-sounding names had their shop windows smashed. Many Canadians of German background, although long-established in Canada, felt the need to change their names.

Tension and often open animosity between Canadians of German and non-German background were evident in many parts of the country, especially in

areas that had large German settlements, such as Renfrew County and the city of Pembroke in eastern Ontario.

In the 1911 census Pembroke, the largest urban centre in Renfrew County, had 1,123 people of German descent in its population of 5,557. Renfrew County had been receiving immigrants from north-eastern Germany since 1858 and in several rural townships the Germans had become the dominant ethnic group by the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914.

As was the case elsewhere in the country, prejudice against people of German background was openly aired. The following article by Brenda Lee-Whiting describes events in Renfrew County and the city of Pembroke during those difficult war years when citizens of German background often found themselves at odds with their fellow Canadians. — *Editor*

The feelings of resentment about treatment during and after the war years still exist among families of German background in the Pembroke area, although few are old enough to have experienced prejudice at first hand.

Conversely, some of their elderly neighbours who are not of German origin still suspect that those of German background were involved in sabotage during the 1914-1918 war.

One old-timer describes, for example, how the trains in his area seemed to have a suspicious tendency to leave the tracks in the years of World War I. He was sure that these derailments were deliberately caused and believes he knows who caused them. "We had a German fellow, a roadmaster in Ottawa and he went around and got the Grand Trunk road crews to take all the elevations out of the curves," he told an interviewer in 1984. These alterations, he felt, caused trains to leave the tracks.

This story of German sabotage — which lacks precise details — is typical of the legends that can be collected orally. More satisfactory records are found in contemporary sources in print. When the war began in Europe in 1914 Pembroke had three weekly newspapers, two of them English and a third in the German language. The *Pembroke Observer,* which was founded in 1855 and the *Pembroke Standard,* which commenced in 1867, were parochial in content, the same local news stories being covered by two different staffs. The German language weekly, the *Deutsche Post,* had begun its life in the Renfrew County village of Arnprior in 1901, founded by a Lutheran pastor, Bahne Peter Christiansen, who was both the publisher and the editor. In 1906, the newspaper's offices were moved from the sawmill community of Arnprior to the more populous town of Pembroke, which was also prospering on the lumber trade of the Ottawa River; it was also closer to the German-speaking settlement in Renfrew County, which had reached 9,014 by the time of the 1901 census. Circulating in eastern Ontario, in Ottawa and in the Pontiac County area of Quebec, the *Deutsche Post* had close to 1,000 subscribers at the time of its move.

The content of the German newspaper had a broader base than that of the two English newspapers in Pembroke, probably because it covered a wider area for its readers. Two of the eight pages of the *Deutsche Post* were devoted to news gathered from its own correspondents in the rural townships and villages. There were also editorials and letters to the editor which conveyed local opinion. As in other Ontario communities, this German newspaper provided its reading public with a review of significant domestic and foreign events. Those who did not read German were unaware that the *Deutsche Post* might be presenting the news from Germany in a favourable light in the early years of the war, until the *Pembroke Observer* decided to enlighten them. These revelations were largely responsible for the irritation and anti-German prejudice that began to surface in Pembroke in 1915. But there was at least one other potential source of trouble. That was the presence of an internment camp at Petawawa, only nine miles west of Pembroke.

The photograph at the top of page 53 shows internees and guards at Petawawa. Photograph courtesy of Mrs. Manse Haley.

A government order-in-council of 28 October 1914 authorized civilian registrars to detain suspected aliens in camps for the duration of hostilities, making it clear that internees were prisoners of war, not convicts.

Major-General Sir William Otter, 69, was summoned out of retirement to command the internment operations, and on 1 November 1914 he was made responsible for the accommodation, feeding, maintenance and employment of the internees, who would be supervised by guards from the Militia Department. Buildings across the land were hastily requisitioned to house these men, and Otter argued for a work camp at Petawawa, where roads and land clearance might usefully expand the country's largest mobilization in the history of Canada in 1914 with at least 12,000 cavalry, infantry and artillery accommodated on the 170 square miles of its grounds. Otter's request was granted and vacated buildings at Petawawa became the first internment camp to be chosen. It was not the most tactful choice, but the general was probably unaware that the initial land for the camp there had been purchased, and in some cases expropriated, from German immigrants who had cleared the wilderness there in the nineteenth century, building their homes and cultivating their farms on free grants of land from the Crown. By 28 January 1915, the 1,000 internees at Camp Petawawa were the subject of comment in the local press. A mixture of Austrians, who were Roman Catholics, and Germans, who were Lutherans, they received visits from local clergymen and were reported to be employed at cutting roads and felling trees. Pastors from the Lutheran churches would be able to minister to German internees in the German tongue, for that was the customary language used in the Lutheran churches of Pembroke, Petawawa and the north-western townships of Renfrew County where the rural population was predominently German in origin.

In Pembroke, where the families of German descent were in a minority, the members of Lutheran churches endured a difficult time. Throughout the war of 1914-1918 the services continued to be held in the German language, which did nothing to allay the suspicions of those who criticized the Reverend W. Kupfer and the Reverend Herman C. Landsky for not attending the Patriotic Fund meetings. The latter affirmed that his youngest children who were still at home spoke German within the family, but pointed out that his oldest son was serving in the Canadian army at the front.

Another clergyman, the Reverend F. Meyers, whose affiliation was not disclosed, told reporters from the *Toronto Daily News* who had been attracted to Pembroke by stories of spying and sabotage, that many Germans in Pembroke were in sympathy with the homeland. He knew of one who had declared that the flag of Germany would yet float over the post office

Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Thur and his wife Christina Carolina Thur settled in Canada in 1859. Members of their family fought with Canadian forces in both World War I and World War II. Photograph courtesy of Dolly Maves, Pembroke.

of Pembroke. Statements like these helped inflame anti-German feelings.

The first hint of trouble at the Petawawa internment camp was reported in July 1915, when 500 prisoners refused to work and were placed on a bread and water diet. There were incidents of escape that summer, but an armed possé captured the escaped men within a few miles of the camp. More serious alarm was caused in September when prisoners escaped and were not caught; the countryside for miles around was occupied by farms owned by people of German descent. Another strike of the interned men occurred when the authorities tried to compel them to work on a religious day. But there was worse to come.

The English weekly newspapers in Pembroke and the one in Eganville had refrained from expressing controversial opinions of their own, but their cautious neutrality was breached at the end of 1915.

The *Pembroke Observer* was the first to disclose, in its issue of 2 December, the uneasiness that had been felt by some residents:

> Quite a sensation has been caused in Pembroke this week by the publication in the *Ottawa Journal* on Tuesday of a lengthy interview given by Mayor Mor-

ris and which casts serious suspicion on many of our German residents, and alleges that the town is the centre of an organized spy system, the machinations of which are being carried all over Canada. . . . It is a fact known to all that some residents of German extraction have at times since the outbreak of war given expression to sentiments and opinions of a nature calculated to arouse the antipathy of loyal citizens whose patriotism is stirred now as it has never been stirred before, and which, if made in Germany under similar circumstances by any one of British extraction, would most probably merit for the person guilty a volley from a military firing-squad. There has at times been much indignation caused by such indiscretions on the part of people who are generally believed to be sympathetic with the Teutonic cause, and no action has been taken to intern or in any way punish those who are believed to be openly unfriendly to the Empire, and this fact is as gall and wormwood not only to the Mayor but to many others whose anxiety for the Empire's cause is deep and sincere.

(The feelings of Mayor Morris were undoubtedly affected by the enlistment of his two sons, Ramsey and Basil, the latter having recruited 133 men from rural areas for the 42nd Lanark and Renfrew Regiment in 1915.)

The Pembroke mayor had speculated that Canada probably had 1,000 German spies.

Though the *Observer* found it difficult to believe the charge that Pembroke was the centre of a spy system that embraced the whole country, it nevertheless reported the story. The paper assured its readers that its circulation area contained little that could be of any military value to the German authorities and declared that the prisoners interned at the Petawawa camp were being decently treated. This issue, did, however, contain a statement that might be interpreted as a warning:

> We are not going to indulge in any washy sentimentality regarding our German fellow citizens. We fancy they are intelligent enough to understand that no one would wish to do any injustice to people who have for so long a time had a large and important part in the business and social life of Pembroke and district, but if any among them assume an attitude hostile to the country at this time they should be dealt with as alien enemies and the authorities should have no hesitation in invoking the law, quite irrespective of any political or other considerations.

The *Observer* commented that these stories singling out Pembroke as a centre for spies had been spread to Toronto and Montreal newspapers, and that the *Ottawa Journal* had followed up its original sensation with an interview with W. A. Moffat, the postmaster at Pembroke. Once again, the local paper dissociated itself from stories lacking credence, but felt obliged to keep its readers informed of the allegations. Mr. Moffat had apparently stated that local Germans had been advised to take their money out of the banks, with particular reference to the Post Office savings department, and that there had been heavy withdrawals, both in Pembroke and in Eganville. His theory was that the money was being transported to the United States by underground railway for transmission abroad.

The Pembroke mayor had speculated that Canada probably had 1,000 German spies altogether, and guessed that some of them would be in Pembroke because of the Petawawa internment camp.

In order to show another point of view that was appearing in print, the *Pembroke Observer* reprinted an article from the *Deutsche Post,* translated into English, on its front page, with some comments added.

The charge that money was being sent to the United States for ultimate transmission to Germany was treated with scorn by the editor of the German language newspaper, Emil Christiansen, son of the late founder. The complaint that the ministers of the Lutheran churches had not attended the patriotic meetings was explained by the statement that these clergymen had never participated in any municipal, political or secular meetings.

As to its reporting of the hostilities, the editor was quite defiant. "As to the *Post* telling its readers all about Teutonic victories, the paper says surely the English-speaking people do not expect the paper to abuse the German people. Since the war began the official statements of both sides have been published, the German side being given a little more prominence because the reports of the Allies were published fully in all the English papers".

Adding fuel to the flames, the *Post* remarked, "We were of the opinion that our readers would like to hear a little more of the other side. This stand has been followed since the beginning of the war and the Canadian censors had never objected".

Stung by this audacity, the *Observer* revealed that a number of its subscribers had discontinued the English paper because it had published war stories that showed Germany in a bad light.

Violence erupted in Pembroke on a summer evening in June 1916. The *Pembroke Standard* commented:

> Monday evening an unusual scene was presented upon our streets. Somewhere about 8 o'clock that evening a crowd of some two or three hundred began to concentrate in front of "The German Post" print-

ing office. In the centre were half a dozen or so of soldiers who are preparing themselves specially to go abroad and fight the Germans. Their eyes instantly spotted the word "German" upon the window, and, of course acting on the impulses that their special training inspires, they resented its appearance and determined that the window was no place for it.

With little ceremony they removed the words "German Post" and after turning the event into a recruiting meeting they went their way. The writer interviewed Mr. Christiansen on the subject and found that he is not taking the affair very seriously. He looks upon the work as that of a few drunken soldiers. He stated that if the council or an officer of the town had come to him and intimated that the sign was objectionable and that in the interests of peace it had better be removed he would remove it, but at the same time he believes it is his right to have the sign there if he so wishes. It is his intention, he states, to remove the sign over the upper part of his premises.

Confinement of German nationals at the internment camp at Petawawa had been ended shortly before this latest outburst in Pembroke. The Canadian guards were having trouble controlling their charges. When the situation early in May assumed threatening proportions and appeared to become too serious for the Petawawa authorities to cope with, six carloads of 300 Austrians were transferred to Kapuskasing's internment camp in northern Ontario. When the new arrivals were ordered to do some camp chores, they objected to manual labour; so hostile were the attitudes and so serious the attempt to escape that the Canadian soldiers were compelled to fix bayonets in order to restrain the internees within the barbed wire enclosure, inflicting some wounds in the process. This confrontation was also reported in the English papers of Renfrew County.

The closing down of the *Deutsche Post* came quietly in November 1916. A terse statement was made by its editor in the last issue: "Owing to a general opinion which prevails at the present time the issue of a German newspaper is undesirable".

In another wartime incident a public school inspector suffered repeated humiliation because it was believed that his surname was German. As a consequence, he was charged by members of the Renfrew County Council with demonstrating pro-German sympathies. Specifically, he was blamed for disregarding the truancy of pupils who attended "German schools" two days a week, instead of public schools, and for replacing teachers of English descent with those of German descent.

Public School Inspector I. D. Bruels defended himself vigorously against the charges, according to the reports in the Pembroke newspapers of that time.

"He says there is not a drop of German blood in his veins, that his remote ancestors were French and Belgian and that his father was born in London, while his mother was of Irish descent, born in Maryland", wrote one observer. Despite this defence, the inspector (who covered 3,000 square miles of territory) was placed under suspension by the County Council on 26 January 1916. They were in a warlike frame of mind and suspicions about this school inspector persisted, even after the deputy minister of education advised the County Council that an investigation had not produced any evidence of wrong-doing. A later suspension of the same inspector, in October of that year, caused an enquiry to be held in Pembroke by a judge from Toronto. Once again, Mr. Bruels was exonerated completely from complaints of double-dealing, partiality, incompetence and pro-Germanism — he was reinstated.

That the war left a legacy of bitterness in Pembroke there can be no doubt. The ownership of a German surname blighted or threatened to blight the careers of many residents who were third-generation Canadians. One incident that was reported in the press involved a young woman, Elsie Wienke, a granddaughter of Wilhelm and Charlotte Wienke who arrived in Canada in 1864. When she was 19 years old, Miss Wienke was in charge of a one-room school at Budd Mills, which held 70 pupils in 1913. Six years after she had taught in that German community in Wilberforce Township, Miss Wienke sought promotion but found that her surname placed her at a disadvantage.

It was reported in a Pembroke paper that Miss Wienke, whose relatives lived in the German settlement near Pembroke, had been appointed by the Board of Education as an assistant in the kindergarten department of Hester Howe School despite the board's

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alarm over her German-sounding name. At one meeting of this board, a Dr. Caroline Brown, described as a leading woman member of the board, had vigorously taken up the cudgels in favour of Miss Wienke. "She is a natural born Canadian", Dr. Brown is alleged to have commented, adding that Miss Wienke's two brothers had served gallantly overseas during the war.

The Pembroke War Memorial bears testimony to the fact that sons and grandsons of German immigrants to the Pembroke area had given their lives fighting on the side of the British Empire in the 1914-1918 years. Yet in the period between the two world wars some families changed the spelling of their surnames so that they appeared to be of British rather than German origin.

The open hostility faced by some German families in World War I was not repeated during World War II, although there were some incidents of harassment. Recent years have seen an upsurge of interest in tracing family trees, with members of the fourth and fifth generations eager to discover their origins. In the last two decades, family reunions in Renfrew County have become so large, with visitors numbered in the hundreds, that halls have had to be hired for meetings, campsites reserved for accommodation and invitation lists researched for a year before the event. To be of German descent is no longer a liability in Renfrew County. ♦

Brenda Lee-Whiting is the author of "Harvest of Stones: The German Settlement of Renfrew County" published by the University of Toronto Press in 1985. The book won the first Joseph Brant Award from the Ontario Historical Society.

She has written a number of articles for "The Beaver" on the subject of German settlement in Canada.

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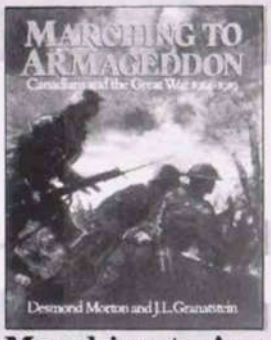

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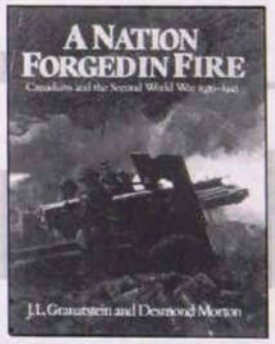

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Entertaining the Troops

By Patrick B. O'Neill

Our life at Camblain l'Abbe, after the hard fighting at the Somme, was really pleasant . . . Special pains were taken to provide concert parties in the different battalions, so that the men might have amusement in the evening. It was wonderful what talent was discovered in the various units. As I look back upon some of those entertainments at the front I think I never enjoyed anything more. Not only were the performers clever and resourceful, but the audience was one that it was thrilling to sit amongst. In the cinema the stage was well appointed and lighted with electric lights; the costumes of the men, especially those who took the part of ladies, were good and well made. The music, vocal and instrumental, was all that could be desired. But the audience, composed of hundreds of strong, keen, young men who had endured hard things, and perhaps, in a few hours after the show, would be once again facing death in the front trenches, was a sight never to be forgotten. Could any performer ask for a more sympathetic hearing? Not a joke was lost upon the men, not a gesture was unobserved; and when some song with a well-known chorus was started, through the murky atmosphere of cigarette smoke would rise a volume of harmony which would fairly shake the building.

These lines written by Canon Scott in *The Great War As I Saw It* indicate the importance the Canadian military attached to the concert parties, whether divisional parties, such as the Rouge et Noir of the First Division, the See Toos of the Second, the Dumbells of the Third, the Maple Leaves of the Fourth, or the over fifty battalion concert parties.

The Canadian Army received continual praise for its leadership and skill in providing entertainment for its troops. In no other army on the Eastern or Western Front did the programme of recreation assume such proportions, and none was more successful in maintaining morale.

In the early stages of the war the task of morale fell to the chaplains, and "the wise chaplain gave as much time to concerts as he did to sermons". Every evening, the chaplain busied himself with the staging of concerts, cinema entertainments, or athletic events. Afternoons were spent searching for "talent" to present the evening's entertainment.

Many of the early battalion entertainments, arranged by the chaplains, were hurried affairs on temporary stages built from material at hand:

> The card tricks of Pte. Owens of the 8th Battalion were interesting, especially the one which knocked the footlight onto a tin of nitro-glycerine. At this point of the entertainment several brave soldiers left the barn, I mean Hall, for the above incident brought to our attention the dangerous articles used in the construction of the stage. A trench floor formed the platform, but the supports looked suspiciously like trench mortar bombs. The footlights were fixed in biscuit tins placed on top of tins of gunpowder. When the candles burned low, several war-scarred veterans suddenly remembered that they had an appointment elsewhere.

By the fall of 1915, performances were presented in large tent theatres erected solely for the purpose rather than in such improvised "Halls"; if the troops were billeted in a town, usually an arrangement was made to use the civilian theatre. This pattern was followed at Bailleul, for example, where the chaplains in the area borrowed $1,500 to rent the local theatre and to purchase equipment for it. The admission to the Bailleul Theatre was two-and-a-half cents per man from the battalion's canteen fund, and within six months, the loan was repaid.

The entertainments were so popular that the men demanded more. Thus encouraged, the chaplains expanded their service at Bailleul by erecting three entertainment tents, each sitting over 1,000, and by purchasing two cinema outfits for two of the new theatres. The chaplains soon after instituted entertainment tents at Passchendaele, Ypres, and Brandhoek.

By 1916, the Canadian Army had over twenty theatres, both temporary and rented, to provide venues for troop entertainments. These presentations were organized like "Church Socials" back home. The chaplain would bring together a group of volunteers, and organize a programme based on the performer's known repertoire.

In June 1916, field entertainment changed forever with the formation of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry Comedy Company. Organized by Captain H.E. Pembroke, Paymaster, the PPCLICC gave its first performance at the Town Hall, Steenvoorde. Through the work of Private J.W. MacLaren, who wrote material and designed the scenery, and Percy Ham, who co-ordinated the music, aided by performers with prior professional theatrical experience, and enhanced by an orchestra of twenty-two men, the PPCLICC was a huge success.

The Comedy Company's format was skits, choruses and plays that reflected the tastes of the men in the trenches. Their humour appealed directly to the men, and, as Canon Scott wrote, "Occasionally, some of the jokes appeared to me a trifle too broad. At such times, I would pay a visit to the Green room, as Senior Chaplain, and mildly suggest their removal."

Where earlier concert parties had formed for an evening's entertainment and disbanded, this troupe would remain together until the end of the war. The officers of the Princess Pats were the first to recognize officially the importance to morale of this type of regimental entertainment. In quiet times, the members of the Comedy Company were relieved of trench duties and given time to prepare new material.

Soon other battalions in the First Division were organizing similar troupes, and the Division itself prepared its own concert party; the Rouge et Noir began operations during Christmas 1916 in the theatre at Bruay. Divisions and battalions took great pride in these performers, particularly their female impersonators as noted in this *Saturday Night* review of a performance somewhere behind the lines:

> The boy who played the heroine gave a perfect rendering of the part. Costume, get up, gestures, voice — both speaking and singing — were such as to deceive the very elect.

Although most of the entertainment produced fell into the category of Music Hall or Vaudeville, there were exceptions. In May of 1918, for example, the 2nd Brigade presented a circus in a field near First Division Headquarters at Le Cauroy.

With the organization of the divisional and battalion concert parties, control of theatrical and musical entertainments ebbed away from the chaplains and flowed to the Y.M.C.A. And this is where such men as Captain Merton W. Plunkett enter the picture.

Plunkett, whose captaincy came from the Y.M.C.A. rather than the Canadian Expeditionary Force, arrived at the Somme Front at the beginning of the September 1916 campaign. At the tent-city of Albert, where men took rest and recreation, Plunkett established his reputation as an entertainer. In performance after performance, as a stand-up comic and singer, assisted by volunteers from the front lines, he played to houses crowded with troops coming from or going to the line. Buoyed by virtually captive, but continually changing, audiences, Plunkett's fame spread through the ranks of the Canadian Expeditionary Force; headquarters' recognition of his ability as a morale booster at this critical time and place led to his emergence as the pre-eminent Y.M.C.A. officer and helped ensure the Y.M.C.A.'s control of troop entertainments.

Canadian War Museum

The Woodpeckers stage a Pierrot show.

Headquarters had realized that the chaplains, because of their other duties, could not devote to entertainment alone the energy Plunkett had offered at the Somme. With the support of Headquarters, Plunkett organized the Y-Emma Concert Party in 1916, using the format developed by the PPCLICC. Among the PPCLICC and the other battalion concert parties, being a performer was an adjunct to being a soldier. Plunkett expanded the idea of the Comedy Company to a larger scale. He chose his performers not from one regiment but all the men serving in France. These men were then released from trench duty to rehearse at sites well behind the lines, and to perform wherever Headquarters directed. The PPCLICC primarily entertained the Princess Pats themselves; the Y-Emmas entertained all the troops.

Once they acquired official status the Y.M.C.A. began a theatre construction campaign in the spring and summer of 1917. By the end of the year, the Y.M.C.A. had twenty-five theatres and cinema halls in continuous operation in France.

In addition to building theatres, the Y.M.C.A. officers began to restructure the concert parties and exert control over them. Their relationship with the 16th Battalion (the Canadian Scottish) of the Third Division is typical. During the early years of the war informal concert parties were regularly organized by Lieutenant Ben Allen for the battalions' amusement. In May 1917, however, the arrangements were put on a more systematic basis with the formation of an official battalion concert party called the Glengarrys. This

new troupe had its premiere performance at the Camblain l'Abbe cinema theatre before Sir Arthur Currie, his staff, and the whole of the 16th Battalion. The production included a Pierrot show, starring Ben Allen, followed by a sketch entitled "A Trip to Blighty", written overnight by Private Howard Large.

Following its run of eighteen performances, the Y.M.C.A. asked that the show be kept intact. From that date until the spring of 1919, the Glengarrys were booked by the Y.M.C.A. for performances throughout the war zone. "A Trip to Blighty" was the Glengarrys' most successful piece — performed over 1,000 times, including a performance at General Headquarters, Montreuil, before the Prince of Wales.

Similar stories of Y.M.C.A. involvement can be told of various other concert parties: the Volatiles of the Third Battalion (Toronto Regiment); the Red Hackles of the 13th Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada); the Whizz Bangs of the Canadian Artillery; the Little Black Devils of the Winnipeg Rifles; the Woodpeckers of the 126th Company of the Canadian Forestry Corps; or the 13th Field Ambulance Concert Party, to name but a few of the many battalion troupes performing in France.

Augmenting the Glengarrys in their performance for General Currie were a group of men who would afterwards form the best-remembered concert party of the war — the Dumbells. After granting permission for the Glengarrys to remain as a touring unit, General J.P. Lipsett gave orders that allowed Captain Plunkett to establish the Third Division Concert Party. Like the other Divisional Concert Parties, the Dumbells took their name from the badge worn by members of the Division.

Using material created by Lieutenant Allen for the original 16th Battalion concert party, the Dumbells made their debut at the Pavilion Theatre at Guay Servins. From a base at Ferfay, the Dumbells were booked by the Y.M.C.A. throughout France. Leonard Young,

Canadian War Museum

Oh It's a Lovely War: The Dumbells, photographed between shows.

who had previously performed the written material for the PPCLICC, and who was convalescing in London after the loss of a leg, supplied them with the music, material, and costumes which established their reputation for high calibre entertainment.

Their reputation reached new heights in the spring of 1918 when the German spring offensive began. While at Villers-aux-Bois with the 59th London Scottish divisional band, General Lipsett encouraged them with the message — "Now as never before the troops need entertainment." The Dumbells supplied continuous entertainment at Villers-aux-Bois, and secured a permanent place in the hearts of the Canadian troops, as battalions of soldiers arrived at the rest camp to be fed, entertained, and marched back into the line.

Two entertainment companies were invited to London to preside at the opening of the Beaver Hut, the Y.M.C.A.'s new social centre. Inaugural honours at the Beaver Hut's 500-seat theatre went to the PPCLICC, which then went on to perform at the St.

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James and Apollo Theatres and at hospitals in England. The Dumbells followed the Princess Pats into the Beaver Hut in August 1918, and then joined a civilian production for one week at the Victoria Palace, and for two weeks at the Coliseum.

At the end of the war, the military saw two functions for the concert parties. One was to raise money in Canada for war relief. Lieutenant Gitz Rice, of the First Canadian Contingent, was detailed to the British government to organize and perform in the musical war drama *Getting Together.* The play included songs Rice had written and sung during his performing days in the trenches, and was originally scheduled to tour Canada and the United States on a recruitment campaign in the fall of 1918. The highlight of the show was a thrilling scene "in which occurs the dash over the top with a tank spitting fire, to lead the way".

Similarly, the Dumbells were offered transportation home at the end of the war if they would remain in the army, with present rank and pay, for a tour across Canada under the auspices of the Red Cross. They declined. Along with many other groups, the Dumbells instead satisfied the military's second function — to amuse the troops awaiting transportation back to Canada. They continued to entertain troops in England until June 1919.

Once back in Canada, Plunkett arranged a Canadian tour for the Dumbells with theatre impresario Ambrose Small. After a brief reunion with families, they began their Canadian theatrical career in September 1919 and went on to amuse and delight civilian audiences across the country for another decade. ◆

Patrick B. O'Neill is in the Department of Speech and Drama, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and is currently working on a bibliography of Canadian sheet music.

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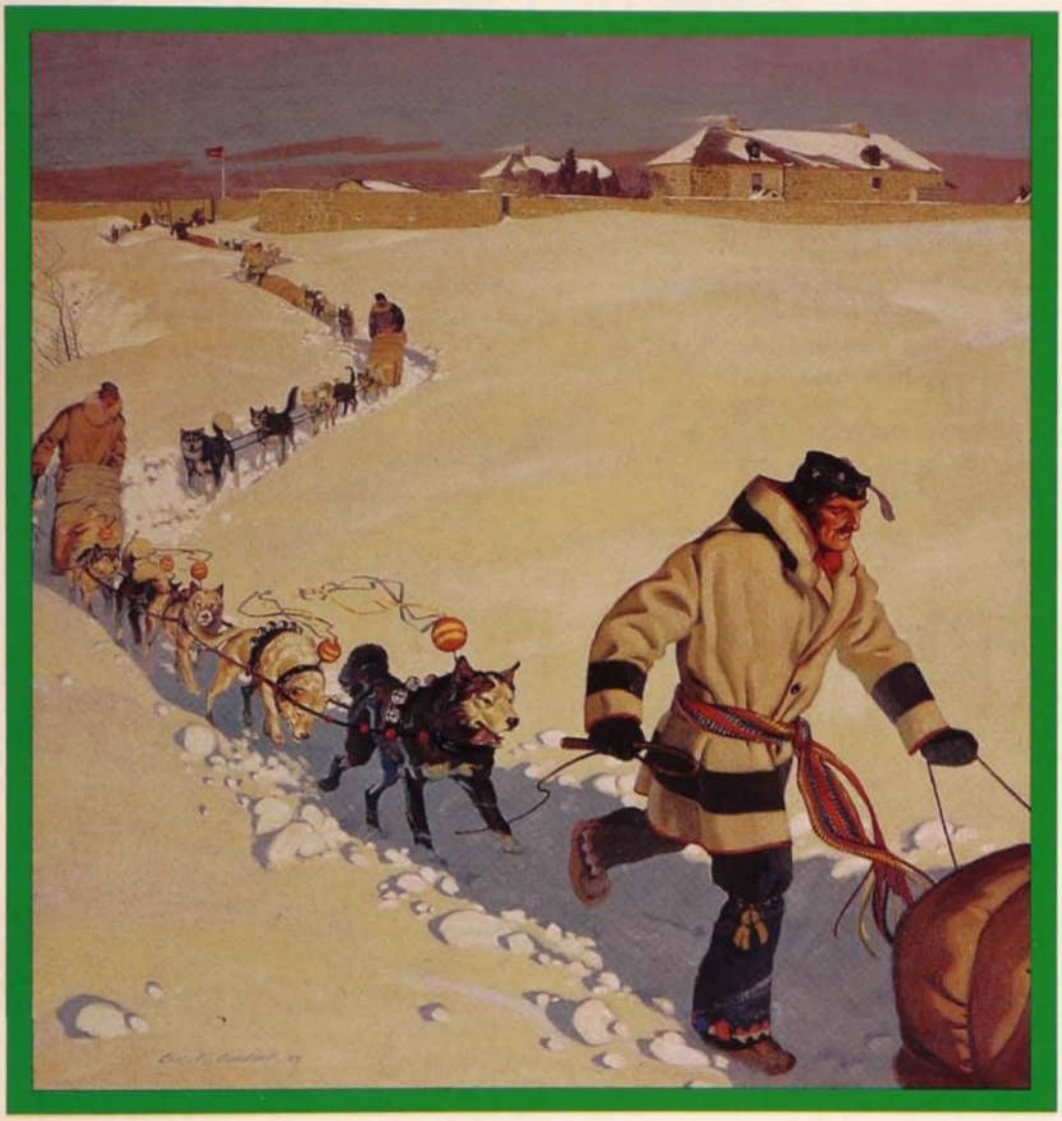

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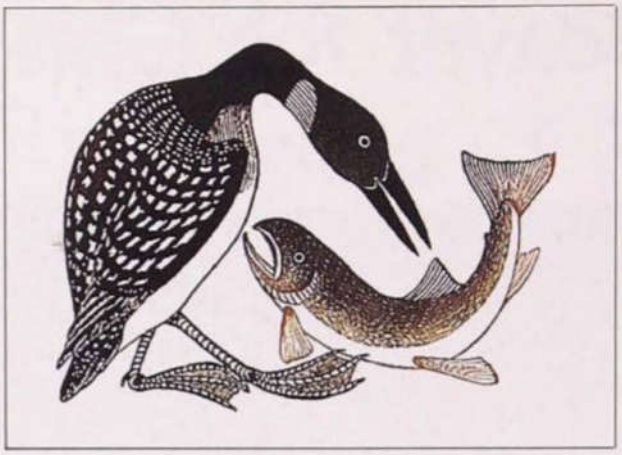

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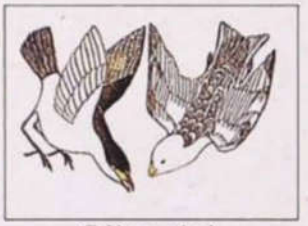

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